

EDUCATION FOR CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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Doctor of Philosophy

by
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This dissertation, written by

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PREFACE

Many times in my life I have wondered whether I could change a particular attitude or way of acting. I have struggled personally with the apparent tension between continuity and change in making decisions for my life. I have recognized the necessity for courageously risking a change, but I have known the folly in ignoring both past heritage and future vision. Often, too, I have wondered if the church could possibly be transformed itself and if it could have any real impact on the world which knows so much suffering and injustice. These wonderings have led me finally to this dissertation.

The search for a new model of Christian religious education is at the heart of this dissertation. The hope is for a new model which does not pull continuity and change apart, but which recognizes how inextricably bound they are. The use of the phrase "Christian religious education" is awkward, to say the least. Its awkwardness may reflect the crisis of identity in the discipline--the pull between those who would call themselves "religious educators" and those who would prefer to be identified as "Christian educators." Using the term Christian religious education does communicate that the search for a new model represented in this dissertation is one which is taking place within the Christian faith community and, at the same time, one which

is shared in many ways by religious educators in other faith communities. For these reasons, I join other recent educators who have chosen to use the cumbersome "Christian religious education" to describe what they do.

I appreciate a moment of pause to express gratitude to some of those communities and persons who have made this dissertation possible. I am grateful to the School of Theology at Claremont, which I have known both as a student and as a faculty member. The faculty here has stimulated and challenged me and the students have never ceased to open new vistas for my thought. I appreciate also the congregations that have nurtured me--the many youth and adults with whom I have journeyed and my sixth grade Church school class which keeps me fresh.

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My deepest gratitude goes to my family, who have endured, cared, and kept me human. My parents, Elizabeth and James Mullino, have never ceased to believe in me, even when I know they were tempted. My children, Cliff

and Rebecca, are living reminders of the importance of the church's educational mission, and they are persons who have cared for me and allowed me to care for them. Also, Joyce, Nan, and Glenda have offered valuable support and interest for which I am grateful. Finally, I thank my husband, Allen Moore, for being a challenging colleague and intimate companion. His ideas were always provocative, and his encouragement and work as "house-husband" were invaluable.

In expressing appreciation to these communities and these persons, I am aware that the way their influences have been brought together is my responsibility. The inadequacies, therefore, in this dissertation are my own.

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ABSTRACT

The history of religious education has been marked by shifts in emphasis between the historical tradition and contemporary experience. The emphasis on historical tradition has been paired with concern for continuity, and the emphasis on contemporary experience, with concern for change. The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to call attention to the need for education which creates openings to past, present, and future and which maximizes the integration of these, and (2) to offer a reformulation of Christian religious education theory and practice--a foundation for a new kind of educational ministry in the Christian community.

The dissertation is an attempt at model-building. It is a three-part study addressing: (1) the tension between continuity and change which has dominated education; (2) the foundations for a new model of Christian religious education; and (3) the proposed traditioning model with its theory and practice. In Part I, particular attention is given to the issues and potential solutions in the movements within twentieth century religious education. In Part II, attention is focused on the nature of the traditioning community in which theologizing is done and the nature of human persons who are the participants in the

educational process. In Part III, the traditioning model is introduced and elaborated in terms of its aims, contexts, and teaching methods, and in terms of its curriculum.

The traditioning model of education which is proposed here is one in which the central task is to involve persons in the living Christian tradition. Implicit in this is the idea that traditioning is an active process of passing down and reforming the historical tradition. This takes place in a community which has responsibility for bearing the tradition and living toward the future.

The traditioning task in educational ministry has two dimensions--hermeneutics, or interpretation, and transformation. These two dimensions are interrelated, and each is made possible by the other. In the hermeneutical task the educator is engaged in creating openings--that is, in interpreting and enabling others to interpret the historical Christian tradition, the contemporary experience of the faith community and the world, and Christian hope. Hermeneutics provides bridges which link past, present, and future in the total life of the Christian community. Transformation is a changing of persons and culture--a conversion. It is based on what is already present, but it moves beyond that to a new creation. It is a reforming of the world, which derives from the interactions among people and with God and with the world of past, present, and future.

The task of Christian religious education is to promote those kinds of interactions that make transformations possible. The task is to facilitate the mating of the old with the new and the hoped for.

The hope implicit in the traditioning model is that the movement of the Christian community toward the future will be deeply informed by the past and present, and that the members of the community will be open to God's transforming power and to their own power as agents of transformation.

PART I

SEEKING A NEW MODEL

Chapter 1

SETTING THE STAGE

Once upon a time God created:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Once upon a time God redeemed:

Now the birth of Jesus took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:18-21)

Once upon a time God moved on the earth--creating and redeeming. In God's creating was redemption, and in God's redeeming was creation. God moved on the earth and the earth has never been the same.

"Once upon a time" is captivating language. The words transport us into another world--a world that is past but still is. When we hear the words, we know that a story will follow which is real because it is a tale of "once in a part of time." The story becomes the bearer of a culture--the story of a people. The Big Story is the

saga of God and God's people. This saga is a traditional history of our community, and it enters into our lives as we enter into it. In the interaction the saga has power to shape our whole being and to shape our future. Likewise the saga is shaped by us as we hear it and as we tell it and live in it. It is a growing story.

The Christian community--in all of its longing for relevance--must recognize that its story is ancient. The same community--in its longing for the stability of long-established truths--must recognize the dynamic way in which its story is told and interpreted and transformed.

THE PROBLEM

And so we are plunged into the tension between continuity and change--between historical tradition and contemporary experience. The history of religious education involves shifts in emphasis between these two. The concern for continuity has been paired with an emphasis on historical tradition, and the concern for change has been paired with an emphasis on contemporary experience. The proponents of one point of view have often assumed that the other point of view is already overly stressed or taken for granted in the church or the society. The problem with this assumption is that what may be an important corrective emphasis at one period becomes itself a one-sided emphasis for another time and situation. Furthermore, in neither

point of view is much attention given to the future.

The tension between continuity and change has actually been a part of the Jewish-Christian community throughout its history. For example, the Old Testament prophets appealed to their own experience of God and their context and to the historical tradition of Israel as their source of authority.¹ The test of true prophecy was not whether prophets appealed to tradition or experience, but the rightness of the text and the interpretation of the text in speaking the Word of God to a particular context. Sanders recognizes that for the prophet to discern the word of God for a particular moment in history the prophet must have

both intimate knowledge of the traditions or "texts" of the ways of God in Israel's past (her mythos or Torah Story), and a dynamic ability to perceive the salient facts of one's own moment in time as they move through the fluidity of history.²

The challenge comes, however, in having that intimate knowledge of both the traditional text and contemporary context and in sensing the fresh meaning of a given text for a given context:

¹James A. Sanders, "Hermeneutics in True and False Prophecy," in George W. Coats and Burke O. Long (eds.) Canon and Authority (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 21-41.

²Ibid., p. 27.

Few would wish to debate the fact that a stable tradition or text may say something different to different situations. What is difficult for modern heirs of the Enlightenment is determination or definition of what the canonical prophets meant by listening to the voice of God (Jer. 7.23,26), or what the Reformers meant by interpretation by or through the Holy Spirit. What can be said today about such a factor in the adaptability of the prophetic message to changing historical moments? What can be said of the prophet's ability "to distinguish whether a historical hour stands under the wrath or love of God"?³

The one challenge has long been recognized--the challenge of determining the meaning of the historical text for changing contexts. The other challenge must also be recognized, however, and this promises to be more controversial. This is the challenge of seeking fresh meanings in the present moment which actually add something new to the tradition.

In saying this we recognize the contribution of both the historical tradition and contemporary experience in the saga of God's people. An arbitrary choice between the two seems neither possible nor desirable. But the Jewish-Christian community has always been plagued with this tension between the historical tradition and contemporary experience and the temptation to choose between the two emphases.

The tension between these emphases has risen again

³Ibid., p. 29.

to the forefront of discussion since Schleiermacher.⁴

This tension has been at the heart of many theological debates as, for example, the debate of the mid-twentieth century between liberal Christianity and neo-orthodoxy, and the corresponding debate between progressive religious education and the neo-orthodox formulation of Christian education. The theologians of hope and liberation theologians have called fresh attention to still a third element in the tension--future hope. Jürgen Moltmann, for example, has argued that future hope offers the guiding focus for our faith, for God is future and is revealed in the event of promise. This emphasis on future is beginning to impact Christian religious education, particularly through the work of Thomas Groome.

The basic issue raised for systematic theology is this: How does the religious community live in faithfulness to its past (continuity) and openness to its present and future (change)? This raises fundamental questions

⁴Friedrich Schleiermacher had profound impact on the methods and concepts of modern theology, particularly with his idea that human experience should be the focus of the theological reflection. The question of what is the starting point for theological reflection has been a prominent issue ever since. See particularly: Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1963). Schleiermacher believed that the philosophical search for God actually derives from the feeling of absolute dependence (I, 16-18), and that one's own deepest experience is united with all of reality, including divine reality (II, 738, 385f, 569f). The task of theology for Schleiermacher, then, is to understand experience.

as to how God is revealed and where the authority of the religious community lies. Is the authority of the Christian faith in the contemporary experience of persons in the world where God is immanent? Is it in the Word of God as revealed and recorded in the Bible or in the Christian Church tradition? Or is it in the eschatological hope revealed in God's promises? Further, is the Christian story one which is already fully revealed and which we, therefore, seek to understand so that we can live in continuity with it? Or, is the Christian story not finished yet, and therefore, continually open to new revelation and new interpretation?

The questions in Christian religious education have been closely related to these. They are questions of what to teach and how and why. Is the content of Christian religious education the Biblical and historical Church tradition or the contemporary experience of the Christian community and the world? Is the method to transmit that tradition or to enable the creative interpretation and reconstruction of present experience? Is the purpose to maximize the continuity of the Christian community or to maximize the potential for change? Or in any of these questions, is the answer somewhere in between?

The desire to transcend the continuity/change polarity is not new in religious education. George Albert Coe urged the importance of both tradition and creativity

in education,⁵ but his own work leaned heavily in the direction of the creativity dimension. Since the time of Coe, the pendulum has continued its swinging. In recent years mediating points of view have emerged, but more has been done to highlight the tension than to resolve it. Some answers have been posed, and some new questions have emerged. These will be explored in Chapter 2.

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this dissertation will be to propose a model of education which maximizes both continuity and change. This promises to be no small task, especially in light of the historical tendency to set the two in opposition to one another.

The assumption underlying the model which is emerging here is that a theory of Christian religious education should explain and stimulate both continuity and change. We need to call into question our dualistic way of thinking--our assumption that continuity rules out change and vice versa. We need, instead, to see the possibility that the more one is continuous with the past, the greater are the possibilities for change, and the more one changes, the more one is continuous with the past. This may sound

⁵George Albert Coe, What Is Christian Education? (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929).

absurd because dualistic thinking is dominant in our culture; however, our task is to overcome such thinking.

The "traditioning model" which will be proposed here offers a fresh perspective for Christian religious education. The concept of traditioning is based on the idea that the Christian community is one which lives in its tradition--always passing on its past, living in its present, and moving toward its future. It is always linked to its past, but it is never static. Continuity and change are always tied together.

The traditioning model is quite different from a socialization (or enculturation) model, which encourages the continuities of the community through socializing persons into the community's beliefs, values, and practices. It is likewise different from a reconstructionist model, which emphasizes the changing of the community through reflecting on and revising one's actions. The former tends to ignore the prophetic element of ministry through which the community is critiqued and recognized as always inadequate to socialize persons for God's Kingdom. The latter tends to be overly optimistic about the community's ability to critique itself, and it tends to ignore the priestly element through which the community remembers and celebrates God's gifts.

The traditioning model provides a new perspective and a pattern for the educational ministry of the Church--

one which attempts to be more adequate than either a socialization or reconstructionist model. The traditioning model affirms what each of these other models affirms, i.e., the importance of passing on the community's beliefs, values, and practices, and the importance of reflecting on and revising the community's actions. The traditioning model, however, is built on the idea that neither of these goals can be achieved separate from the other.

Both continuity and change are essential to the life of the Christian community. The phenomenon of continuity makes it possible for persons to enter into the life of the community, and the phenomenon of change provides for the openness of the community to present experience and future possibility.

The word "model" is chosen to describe this undertaking because it suggests a description of educational ministry that provides a pattern for our actions. The concept of model is easiest to describe in the form of a story.

As everyone knows most colleges and universities are troubled by persons who insist on wearing paths across the grass rather than walking on the sidewalks. Once upon a time the administrators of a new college vowed to avoid this perennial sidewalk problem by delaying the pouring of sidewalks on the new college grounds. Classes began and students and faculty

walked across the dirt in whatever patterns they wished. After a year of such unguided walking, the college was marked with paths. The traffic patterns had taken a recognizable shape as paths were formed all across the grounds. The administrators then put the sidewalks in where the paths had been worn.

- Let these sidewalks represent for us a model. Just as the sidewalks are laid out according to the actual flow of traffic on the college campus, the model is based on whatever data about education theory and practice are available. It is a description of what is known--a description which is as adequate as we can put forth. Just as the sidewalks will serve as a guide for walkers in the future, the educational model serves as a guide for those on the education journey. It is a pattern for our actions. Neither the sidewalks nor the model guarantee that no one will ever again walk on the grass or venture in new directions. They offer instead a pattern which is as adequate as we can envision at the present time.

A model, then, emerges as we reflect theoretically on educational practice, and as we allow our reflections to guide our future practice. It is not an unchanging description, however, which conforms perfectly with nature. It is instead an explanation of experience that is always open to reconstruction in light of new experience or revelation or analysis. One model cannot be the final word, nor can it take the place of all earlier models. It is,

rather, a new perspective describing and guiding educational ministry.

What is needed now is a model of Christian religious education which maximizes persons' connectedness with the past so that the transformations taking place in their lives will be rooted and will be all the richer. What is needed is a model which maximizes persons' changing so that their connectedness will function to help them live in relation to the changing world and God's call forward. This calls for a model which opens persons to past, present, and future and to the interactions among these. This is a kind of opening up and bringing together which cannot be taken for granted, for it does not often happen without intentionality.

The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to call attention to the need for education which creates openings to past, present, and future and which maximizes the integration of these, and (2) to offer a reformulation of Christian religious education theory and practice--a foundation for a new kind of educational ministry in the Christian community.

This is a particularly important need in a complex world in which the church lives among many pressures pulling in different directions. The church faces real temptations either to return to a "simpler" past or to change rapidly in order to be relevant to the times. Yielding to

either temptation is one-sided and inadequate.

What is needed in education is a renewed vision of how continuity and change exist in relationship. What is further needed is an educational model for stimulating both and working out this relationship. The purpose of this dissertation will be to create such a vision and such a model.

THE PROMISE OF A NEW MODEL

And so the task of this project is set out, with no less challenge than met Coe. The launching theme is simply this--that the interrelationship among past, present, and future is inherent, unavoidable, and necessary in religious education. The issue is not whether these should be interrelated, but how to respond to the inevitable influences of past, present, and future on persons in the faith community. The thesis here is that the tension between continuity and change is resolved only when the artificial dichotomies are broken down and the attempts at delicate balancing are abandoned. The tension is resolved when education is done in such a way as to maximize both continuity and change--that is, to maximize the transmission of historical tradition and creative interpretation and transformation of contemporary experience and future hope.

The model proposed here is one in which the central

task is to involve persons in the living Christian tradition. For this reason the model is called a traditioning model. Implicit in this is the idea that traditioning is an active process of passing down and reforming the historical tradition. The traditioning task in educational ministry has two dimensions--hermeneutics, or interpretation, and transformation. These two dimensions are inter-related, and each is made possible by the other.

Hermeneutics is an opening up of persons to their past traditions, their present experiences, and their future hopes. Hermeneutics cannot, in fact, be done without an eye to the past out of which the Christian community lives and an eye to the future toward which that community moves. The thesis here is that education maximizes continuity and change when it facilitates the hermeneutical task. The educator is engaged in creating openings--that is, in interpreting and enabling others to interpret the historical Christian tradition, the contemporary experience of the faith community and the world, and Christian hope. Hermeneutics provides a bridge which links past, present, and future in the total life of the Christian community.

Transformation is a changing of persons and culture --a conversion. The change can be in outward form or in inward nature. Transformation is a shaping of persons and culture. It is based on what is already present, but it moves beyond that to a new creation. It is a reforming of

the world, which derives from the interactions among people and with nature and with God. The task of education is to promote those kinds of interactions that make transformation possible. The task is to facilitate the mating of the old with the new and the hoped for. The task is to participate in new creation.

An attempt is made in the development of the traditioning model to take seriously the existing body of educational theory and to move beyond this. The aim is: (1) to present the traditioning task as central to the functions of Christian religious education; (2) to include not only the past and present, but also, Christian future hope as the content which we interpret and live out of; (3) to move beyond the continuity/change dualism set up in earlier decades of educational theory and create a model deeply engaged in both dynamics; (4) to rethink and reform the theological, social-psychological, and philosophical foundations of Christian religious education; and (5) to define the model and its implications in the context of the educational practice in Christian faith communities.

BASIC CONCEPTS

A few key concepts will be probed and explored in this dissertation as we probe the apparent conflict between continuity and change. These different phenomena have often been paired respectively with emphases on tradition

and experience. These four concepts will be explored here as a prologue to the drama in which these concepts play various roles and are viewed from differing perspectives.

Continuity

Continuity is a state of connectedness in which parts are connected together in an unbroken chain through time and space. The continuity of the Christian community, which is the concern of this dissertation, is reflected in the connectedness of the community's beliefs, practices, values, and stories through time and across the globe.

The radical claim in this dissertation is that the community must recognize how deeply connected it is through time and across the globe. The thesis moves sharply again against the "to each one's own" approach to faith, recognizing the importance of each person's linkage with persons of the past and persons in other communities. Efforts to ignore this connectedness are made in certain individualistic political and social theories, but these efforts are illusory. To suppose that what is consumed in the First and Second World countries, for example, does not affect the economy and the availability of food in the Third World is to ignore political realities.

Change

Change is the opposite of continuity in that it is a transformation, conversion, or reversal that breaks into the connectedness in some way. Change is an action of making something different or becoming different. It includes deviating from normative patterns of beliefs, practices, values, and stories. In the Christian community change takes place in each generation and in different parts of the globe as persons read the past from inside their own unique sociohistorical contexts, and as novelty is introduced into these different situations through the in-breaking of God.

The radical claim in this dissertation is that change is so much a part of the world that neither persons nor the Church as a whole are ever static. The idea that either is unchanging or even has an unchanging core is rejected, along with the idea that Christian truth is in any way static. Tradition, then, does not embody static truth which is applied in different forms in different situations. Christian tradition is ongoing, and the truth that is reflected in it never stands still. Neither do the persons and the Church which participate in it.

Tradition

Tradition is a handing over, or passing down, of

the good news. It is initiated by God's gifts to the people and these, in turn, are passed on through the community's beliefs, practices, values, and stories which are inherited. These traditions are characteristically communicated at first by oral transmission and through the community's life. They generally provide norms which are rooted in the past and which guide the Christian community in the present.

Here we are distinguishing among Tradition (that which God gives, or hands over), tradition (the process by which this gift is passed on), and traditions (the vehicles of communication). The concept of tradition might not seem so objective and immutable to some or so oppressive to others if we made this distinction. What often happens is that traditions become equated with Tradition, and God's actions get reduced to human proportions. If these traditions were seen, instead, as windows into God's gifts (Tradition) and vehicles for communicating this to others, then the real depth and power of tradition could be appreciated more fully.

What is the meaning of the tradition process (traditioning), then? It is initiated by God's gift and revelation. The gift from God is, then, witnessed to and handed down.⁶ It is something to be received and preserved

⁶Joseph R. Geiselmann, The Meaning of Tradition (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966), pp. 10-11; Yves M.-J.

and something with transforming power.⁷ This suggests that the process of tradition is one which itself embodies both continuity and change. The community preserves the gift and the witness to this gift, but the gift and the witness actually change that community. Furthermore, the community continues to interact with God and the world so that its witness never stands still. God continues acting, and the community is continually reformed. The emphasis may vary between preservation and transformation, but both are essential to the nature of tradition.

As a process, tradition is a means by which continuity is made possible through the communication of one people with another across cultures and across generations. Missionaries have always engaged in establishing continuities as they pass on their own community's faith (beliefs, practices, values, and stories) to other communities. Likewise, much of the teaching and preaching ministry of the Church has sought to pass on the community's faith to succeeding generations. Through this "passing on," connectedness is made possible across cultures and generations. A common language and a common core of beliefs, practices, values, and stories are shared. This common language and

Congar, The Meaning of Tradition (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1964), pp. 14-16; F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingston, The Oxford Dictionary of the Bible (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 1388-1389.

⁷Geiselmann, pp. 97-98.

common core are the traditions which are evidence of continuity, and out of these come common norms or guides.

Yves Congar likens the tradition process to a delivery system initiated by God's acts and continued through Christ and the early church and the contemporary church.⁸ Tradition, then, is the chief example of the interdependence of human persons. Persons deliver the tradition to one another, mediating the divine to one another. Congar emphasizes the significance of this:

We can bring about our own death, but we cannot give ourselves life. In the closed world of living creatures, species even live on one another, and the balance of the whole system is assured by the co-operation of the individual parts--"it is a vast web, a seamless garment." In the normal course of events we receive our faith from another; we cannot baptize ourselves. Thus, it is normal for persons to depend on one another in order to achieve their supernatural destiny.⁹

This tradition process, then, has both horizontal (person to person, community to community) and vertical (persons to God) dimensions. It includes all the communication of God to humanity, which is, in turn, transmitted through humanity.¹⁰ This is the meaning intended in this study.

The word "traditioning" is used here to refer to

⁸ Congar, pp. 14-16.

⁹ Yves M.-J. Congar, Tradition and Traditions (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 241; see also pp. 240, 315.

¹⁰ Congar, Meaning of Tradition, pp. 17-18.

this process in order to keep the distinction clear between tradition as a process and traditions. Traditioning is the handing over of God's gifts from one to another, and traditions are the vehicles by which this is done. The distinction between scripture and tradition which has at times been controversial in Christian history will not be dealt with here. The concept of traditions is being used in a more generic sense. Traditions are taken to include scripture, doctrine, rituals, and stories. They include any communication of the good news which has been part of Jewish-Christian history.

Experience

Experience, like tradition, is both a process and the result of the process. Experience is the process of observing, participating in, or living through events. This can include events in one's external environment, in one's internal thoughts and feelings, or in other persons' accounts. In the Christian community, then, one could say that persons experience the events of their life together and of their world. Persons also experience their own thoughts and feelings, and they experience other persons' stories in the form of written documents and oral transmission. The Bible, for example, is a record of human experience in all of these dimensions--historical events, internal stirrings of the soul, and the sharing of ritual

and stories. What is more, the Bible comes to us as a document to be reexperienced freshly by us.

The result of this process of experience is also called experience. Experience, then, is both the active living through and the resulting wisdom, knowledge, skill, and so forth. Therefore, we can speak of a person's having a rich experience (participating in a particularly interesting event or events), and we can also speak of a person's having a wealth of experience (wisdom, knowledge, and skill resulting from the participation). Likewise, we can speak of a person's having an experience with drugs (participating in drugs in some way) and we can also speak of a person's having experience with drugs (wisdom, knowledge, and skill resulting from his or her participation).

We can finally speak of experience collectively as the sum of the conscious events of a person or a community. This way of speaking of experience is cumulative, including both the past and present, and anticipating the future. We can, therefore, speak of the Christian community's experience, as including both its historical traditions (what have been handed over and passed on) and its present experiences of God and the world.

These three dimensions of the meaning of experience give some sense of the richness of the concept. Its usage in religious education literature has often been more limited. The emphasis has usually been on the role of

present experience in education and has been two-fold. It has included emphases on student-centered education (which finds its starting point in the personal experiences of the students) and on field-based, or laboratory, education (which focuses on the educational value of learning by doing and relating with others). An attempt will be made here to enlarge these emphases to include not only the personal and field-based experiences, but also the cultural and historical dimensions of all experience. The cultural and historical experience actually shapes persons and the way in which they experience events in the present. Likewise the events of the present influence persons' cumulative historical and cultural experience.

In these definitions, one can already see that tradition, though rooted in the past, cannot be limited to the past because it is an ongoing process of passing on. Tradition is continually being formed and reformed. One can also see that experience, though related to events of the present, includes the past as part of the accumulated experience of persons as well. One might also recognize, however, that the educational focus has often been on the historical tradition or the contemporary experience, and the polarity between these two has been perpetuated by the failure to recognize the fullness of either.

Throughout this dissertation the historical tradition/contemporary experience polarity will be addressed.

Though the polarity itself is a false one it is so deeply ingrained that it requires thorough-going analysis. Every time the polarity is stated a certain irony will be communicated, as the so-called polarity is not, in fact, a polarity at all.

THE TASK

This dissertation will examine the attempts to focus education and theology on either historical tradition or contemporary experience. The hope for the traditioning model is that it will embrace the fullness of the meaning of both tradition and experience. Once dualistic thinking is overcome it becomes clear that the greatest faithfulness to historical tradition is found in the most dynamic creativity in the present--creativity in which past, present, and future meet.

The dissertation is an attempt at model-building. It is a three-layered study. In Part I we are dealing with this tension between continuity and change that has so plagued Christian religious education. The basic problem has been laid out in this Introduction. In Chapter 2 we will seek clarification of the issues and potential solutions in the movements within twentieth century religious education.

In Part II we will seek to reexamine and rebuild the foundations for a model of Christian religious

education. Much rebuilding is needed for the present foundations are very shaky at points. Our concern will be primarily with the nature of the traditioning community (Chapter 3) and the nature of human persons (Chapter 4). Any model of education must be founded on clear understandings of that community in which theologizing is done and those persons who are the participants in the educational process.

In Part III the focus will be on the traditioning model of education. This model will be introduced (Chapter 5) and elaborated in terms of its aims, contexts, and methods (Chapter 6) and its curriculum (Chapter 7). The model will hopefully generate new images for the theory and practice of Christian religious education--images which are vital and which facilitate the traditioning of the faith communities. These communities stand in the present, pulled by past and future. They have no choice but to move into the future. The hope implicit in the traditioning model is that the movement to future will be deeply informed by the past and present, and that communities will be open to God's transforming power and to their own power as agents of transformation.

Chapter 2

THE DILEMMA: TRADITION AND EXPERIENCE
IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Mankind [sic] likes to think in terms of extreme opposites. It is given to formulating its beliefs in terms of Either-Ors, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities. When forced to recognize that the extremes cannot be acted upon, it is still inclined to hold that they are all right in theory but that when it comes to practical matters circumstances compel us to compromise. Educational philosophy is no exception.¹

In 1938 John Dewey expressed dismay that educational philosophy was torn between traditional and progressive education. Traditional education was predominantly concerned with conveying the information, skills, and moral standards of the past to serve as a guide to persons in the present. Progressive education was primarily concerned with learning through experience and with encouraging persons in their self-expression and individuality and free activity.

Dewey himself was a pioneer in progressive education, but he became increasingly concerned about educational theories being conceived in such dichotomies. The

¹John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 17. Note: Throughout this dissertation masculine language will be left unchanged in direct quotes and noted by [sic].

pendulum swings back and forth as new theories emerge in reaction against others. He set out to articulate an educational theory based on a philosophy of experience.² He saw such a theory as making the past relevant to the present and future, and he saw it as escaping the unfortunate dichotomy between teaching the past and educating through experience.

The dualism which Dewey bemoans is persistent in religious education as well. C. Ellis Nelson recognizes the tension between tradition and transformation as the oldest problem in religious education.³ He, like Dewey, resists dichotomizing and insists on the dynamic relationship of tradition and experience in human lives.⁴ Others in recent years have tackled this problem with similar concern, notably Thomas Groome, Mary Boys, Maria Harris, and Letty Russell.

A fuller understanding of the problem and possible clues for its resolution can be sought in the history of

² Ibid., pp. 17-23.

³ C. Ellis Nelson, "Our Oldest Problem," in Padraic O'Hare (ed.) Tradition and Transformation (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1979), p. 58.

⁴ Ibid., p. 59; C. Ellis Nelson, Where Faith Begins (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967), pp. 67-94. See also, Letty Russell's critique of either/or dichotomies: "Hanging on Traditions and Changing the World," in O'Hare, pp. 73-86.

religious education. The problem can hardly be considered in isolation from that history. Neither can it be understood apart from the questions currently being asked in the practice of Christian education nor the educational theories in which some synthesis of the poles is envisioned. The purpose in this chapter will be to add historical depth and practical-theoretical breadth to our understanding of this problem of the polarity between continuity and change and the potential resolutions.

HISTORIC SHAPES OF EDUCATION

The focus here will be on twentieth century movements in religious education, in which the tension between historical tradition and contemporary experience has been highlighted in many different ways. We have recognized in Chapter 1 that tradition is ongoing--that it is not purely historical. We have also recognized that experience is cumulative--that it is not purely contemporary. For the purposes of this discussion, however, we will deal with the historical aspects of tradition and the contemporary aspects of experience. This is the way the dichotomy has often been set up, and throughout this dissertation the oft-assumed ~~dichotomy~~ will be referred to in terms of historical tradition and contemporary experience.

The twentieth century educational debate between

these two emphases grew out of earlier movements, so we are dealing with an issue that has long plagued Christian religious education. Notice that even the language is different on the two sides of the debate. The experiential side was more often conceived in the early years as "religious education" because the proponents were most concerned with the education of persons in the religious spirit and values. The traditional side was more often conceived as "Christian education," for proponents were more confessional in their interests and were concerned with educating persons in the Christian faith.

On the Side of Experience

Since the seventeenth century educators have shown increasing concern with the role of present experience in education. Increased attention has been directed to experience, i.e., to those events that students have actually observed or participated in. This was a particular emphasis of the progressive religious education movement which emerged alongside the progressive philosophy of education in the United States in the early twentieth century. Its influence was dominant in North American religious education until the 1950s, and is still a force in religious education theory and practice. Progressive education was aimed at moving persons and society forward by

stimulating people to think and live effectively through experiential educational methods. This philosophy of education influenced (and was influenced by) the thinking of George Albert Coe, William Clayton Bower, and others who were early leaders of the religious education movement.

Coe is often referred to as the father of the religious education movement. His basic understanding of Christian education was: "an experiment in being Christian, an experiment through which the meaning of 'Christian' unfolds to us."⁵ He understood the goals of education to be social adjustment and the development of the potential religious nature of children.⁶ In keeping with these emphases, he called for student-centered education, and placed emphasis on "learning by doing" and self-expression.⁷ Coe's prevailing concern was with experience--being aware of the previous experience of the students, designing educational experiences that would make contact with the needs and interests of persons at different ages, and

⁵George Albert Coe, What Is Christian Education? (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 21.

⁶George Albert Coe, Education in Religion and Morals (New York: Revell, 1907), pp. 14-17, 21-25, 106-107, 119. The transmission of the race's religious heritage is included in this for Coe, but development is understood to be more central than instruction. See these emphases also in George Albert Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917).

⁷Coe, Education in Religion and Morals, pp. 124 f.

reconstructing the experiences of the individuals and the community toward more ideal forms of relatedness.

Bower's philosophy of education was similar. He saw education as creative and processive. Education was understood as initiation into a creative and social experience, and the goal of religious education was to help persons develop moral and spiritual qualities. Bower was writing a few years (25) after Coe had begun and he took some of Coe's ideas further than Coe had done, particularly the idea of education as processive. Bower's educational thrust, like Coe's, was experiential. He identified the educational process with the process of analyzing experience and re-forming values and action. This process was done in light of one's own past experience and racial experience, and it was done largely in the context of a creative, social setting which itself provided experience in the democratic process.⁸

Cultural Influences

This emphasis on the experiential, experimental, and processive nature of education did not arise in a vacuum. It was shaped in part by the particular cultural context in

⁸William Clayton Bower, Character Through Creative Experience (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).

which it emerged. The context was the early twentieth century United States prior to World War I and the depression --a period of general optimism in this country. Industrial democracy was thought to be the institutional form that would re-create the world into an ideal social order. Many historical commentators speak of the progressive movement as a reflection of the western (particularly United States) liberal culture of the time. The turn of the century was a period of optimism about human nature and achievement. This was a period when the Social Gospel was influential with its naive optimism about building God's Kingdom on Earth.

Furthermore, the early twentieth century was impacted by the emergence of Biblical criticism, which challenged the literal, transmissive Biblical teaching of the day. The absolute authority of the Bible was brought into question, and interpretation came to be understood as more complex than simple and obvious.

This was also a period when pragmatism, instrumentalism, and experimentalism were dominant in United States culture. Experimentalism had begun to emerge in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries with Francis Bacon. Its general influence on culture culminated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States with the pragmatism of Pierce, James, and Dewey,

and with the social psychology of George Herbert Mead. With pragmatism came the effort to relate the empirical method to all areas of life and thought, including education. The consequences of this movement in education were a movement away from deductive to inductive methods and recognition of the experimental nature of the educational process. Emphasis came to be placed on learning from experience and the analysis of experience. Coe reflected this influence in his basic definition of Christian education as "an experiment in being Christian." The influence on Bower is evidenced particularly in his concept of the educational process focused on persons' studying the content of their own experience and making decisions about action in light of probable outcomes. He was basically advocating empirical analysis of experience and experimentation.

Historical Influences within Educational Theory

In addition to the dominant ideas and ethos in the United States, several historical developments in educational thought influenced the emerging of experiential emphases in education. Three historical streams of thought which were particularly influential will be lifted out here.

Developmental processes in human life. One stream of thought influencing twentieth century experiential

education was the increasing recognition of the developmental processes in human life. This was stressed first by Comenius (late seventeenth century) with his emphasis on being responsive to the order of nature--fitting the teaching to the child. Jean Jacques Rousseau in eighteenth century France and Johann Pestalozzi somewhat later in Switzerland emphasized that education should be done through experience and that the learning experience should be appropriate to the natural development of the students. Friedrich Froebel took these ideas to their natural conclusion with his emphasis on child-centered education. He advocated such things as the use of games and play as educational methods, and modern kindergarten education has been shaped under the influence of his ideas.

In the mid-nineteenth century religious institutions were being impacted to some extent by such developmental ideas through a few people like Horace Bushnell. His emphasis was on helping persons grow as Christians through the nurturing experiences in the church and home. He wanted children to be brought up "in conversion," and his often-quoted thesis was: "That the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise."⁹

⁹ Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), p. 10.

He emphasized the roles of worship, play, and family experiences of all kinds in the nurture of children, recognizing that children do learn from these experiences before full cognitive development has taken place.

Finally, the developmental focus in general education came to a new culmination in John Dewey (in the early twentieth century United States) who suggested that education itself is a process and that persons develop in continuous, never-ending ways. The impact of Dewey and these earlier educational theorists was felt strongly in the progressive religious education movement of the twentieth century United States. The most obvious impact was a radical shift in attention to the natural processes of students and a consequent shift to student-centered education. Religious education came to be seen as facilitating the development of persons through age-appropriate experiences, rather than instructing them in the information and values of the past. Developmental theory came to be used by Coe and others as a "point of contact" with the students of different ages.

God-human relatedness. A second stream of thought influencing experiential education was an increasing interest in the God-human relationship. This was emerging in two different ways. Comenius (seventeenth century) had a mystical view of the divine-human unity. Later in the

nineteenth century Froebel's work emerged out of his own belief in the unity of all living things, and Ralph Waldo Emerson placed emphasis on human movement toward unity with the Absolute. Alongside this more mystical stream of thought was the evolution of natural theology. John Locke advocated natural theology in the late seventeenth century, and Henry Nelson Wieman took natural theology to some of its natural conclusions in the twentieth century. The implications of these movements for the progressive religious education movement were an optimism about God's being revealed in and through the world and a consequent turning of attention to human relationships where, in fact, God was understood to be present. Both Coe and Harrison Elliott, who came later, stressed divine immanence and spoke of religious education out of the assumptions of natural theology. These stresses led educators into seeing human experience as the central content of education.

Educational value of ordinary experience. The third stream of thought contributing to the rise of experiential education was the increasing attention which was being given to the educational value of ordinary experience. Benjamin Franklin advocated practical education in all of life, and we have already noted that Pestalozzi stressed experiential models of education which are in tune with the natural learning processes in

children.

This was further influenced in the twentieth century by the increasing sophistication of psychological learning theory. Some of the influences coming out of this emerging body of theory were the emphases on problem-solving as a contributor to learning and on the importance of applying ideas in practice.¹⁰

Dewey addressed this issue in his writing and in his school where he stressed the role of social experience in education. Under his guidance in the laboratory school at the University of Chicago, teaching was done through active participation in the various fields of study. The consequences of this development for religious education were, again, a moving away from transmissive education and increased attention to experiential education. The starting point for religious education came to be the life situation, and even the resources of the Bible and tradition were approached only through contemporary real life problems. This was particularly spelled out by Harrison Elliott in the 1940s.

On the Side of Tradition

The shapes of religious education reviewed above

¹⁰ Harrison Elliott, Can Religious Education Be Christian? (New York: Macmillan, 1940), pp. 40-51.

were emerging largely in opposition to prevalent modes of education in which the stress was on transmitting the historical tradition, or the heritage of the past. Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Bushnell, Dewey, Coe, and Bower were considered radical in their educational thinking, for they were calling for emphases that were alien to the educational practices of their day. Though these shapers of education have radically impacted the twentieth century understandings of education, the dominant educational forms in religious communities continue to be centered around transmitting the knowledge and values of the past.

Twentieth Century Shapers

Particularly notable defenders of the tradition-based education in the early twentieth century were the leaders of the Sunday School movement. Later in the century, theorists emerged who laid foundations for neo-orthodox interpretations of Christian education in Protestantism and for the kerygmatic renewal in Roman Catholic catechesis.

Sunday School movement. The Sunday School movement was launched in England in the late eighteenth century. (The launching date is usually set at 1780.) From its inception it was designed to provide something for young

people which they were lacking. In the beginning the Sunday School was to provide a place for young boys to go during idle hours, an opportunity to learn to read and write, and an opportunity to learn about the Bible and become Christian. The movement began as a response to real human need --i.e., the need for poor boys to occupy their leisure time constructively and to learn things they had no opportunity to learn elsewhere. At the same time, the movement was, from the outset, more focused on transmitting the accumulated skills and knowledge of the past than on helping these young men to interpret their present experience.

Certain characteristics of the Sunday School movement illustrate this point further. First, it was an evangelizing movement, and this was never more true than on the frontier in the United States. The goals of the movement at that time were to prepare persons for conversion and for death, so persons were taught primarily about salvation and judgment.¹¹ The emphasis on conversion continued in the movement, so salvation continued to be a teaching theme. The content in later years, however, did shift away from judgment themes and was more focused on what was understood as basic Biblical teaching.¹² The evangelizing

¹¹Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright, The Big Little School (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1980), pp. 70-76.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 90-108.

thrust continued, and leaders of the movement began with missionary zeal to look toward the whole world as the frontier of the Sunday Schools. What was being carried around the world, in fact, was Christianity as understood in the civil religion of Great Britain and the United States.¹³

A second characteristic of the Sunday School movement was its emphasis on unity and uniformity. Being an ecumenical Protestant movement, it was designed to teach those essential principles and ideas of Christianity that all Protestants agreed upon. Sunday School teaching in the early 1900s was based on the Uniform Lesson Plan, in which these basic principles and ideas were set forth in an orderly way. As noted above, these essential principles and ideas were often identifiable with civil religion.

This leads into a third characteristic of the movement, which was its emphasis on teaching the subject matter. Kathan notes: "The Bible has been the central course of instruction from the beginning, and where it is not, parents and others question its [the Sunday School's] validity."¹⁴ This emphasis on the subject matter and the design of the Uniform Lesson Plan itself was criticized by

¹³Gerald E. Knoff, The World Sunday School Movement (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), pp. 23-24, 60.

¹⁴Boardman W. Kathan, "The Sunday School Revisited," Religious Education, LXXV, 1 (January-February 1980), 13.

some of the professional religious educators of the era. One dominant criticism was that the same material was taught to everyone and developmental differences in needs and experiences were largely ignored. Robert Lynn and Elliott Wright point out in their history of the Sunday School that the leaders of the Sunday School movement did, in fact, treat children as little adults rather than as children until early in the twentieth century.¹⁵ Note, however, that this orientation to purely traditional subject matter and this neglect of human life experiences began to change as early as 1920. In this year William Bower's International Lesson Committee produced a curriculum which broadened the subject matter itself to include social interaction and life experience.

A fourth characteristic of this Sunday School movement was that it was a lay movement. It was begun and continued by lay persons, and it was only domesticated by the churches in the early years of this century. This would suggest that until rather late in its history it was segmented off from the experiential life of the churches in worship, mission, and so forth. Some of the experiences of the faith community were not, then, available to its content or scope of influence. In fact, on the United States

¹⁵Lynn and Wright, pp. 70-76, 120-129.

frontier, the Sunday School often preceded both churches and public schools in new settlements, so it was often considerably isolated from many experiences of congregational life.

Neo-orthodox and kerygmatic approaches to Christian education. The Sunday School movement not only became domesticated, but tradition-oriented modes of Christian education began to emerge from other quarters in the mid-years of this century. In Protestantism H. Shelton Smith argued strongly against experiential education from a neo-orthodox point of view, and in Roman Catholicism Jungmann and Hofinger urged the teaching of tradition with particular emphasis on the "central core of the message we are to proclaim."¹⁶ The thrust of both neo-orthodoxy and the kerygmatic renewal was Christocentric. Both of these movements were opposed to traditionalism for the sake of traditionalism. Rather than being concerned with the communication of every "jot and tittle" from the historical tradition, advocates in both movements were concerned that

¹⁶ Johannes Hofinger, The Art of Teaching Doctrine: The Good News and Its Proclamation (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1957), p. 8; see also Johannes Hofinger, Our Message Is Christ (Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1974), pp. 6-11; Josef A. Jungmann, Announcing the Word of God (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967), pp. 59-65; Josef A. Jungmann, Handing on the Faith (New York: Herder & Herder, 1959).

persons encounter the living reality of Christ through that tradition. This was not for the sake of knowing details of the Biblical or historical account, but for the sake of living a Christian life.

Interestingly enough, Jungmann and Hofinger were not themselves reacting against experiential education, but against a more extreme form of tradition-based education which did not separate the essential doctrines from the embellishments, or elaborations. Hofinger urged educators to be less concerned with precise formulations and more concerned with the understanding of Christian doctrine in relation to living. He was not arguing for a largely experiential mode of education in the sense of focusing on interpreting and reconstructing one's present experience. He was particularly concerned with what central messages and doctrine were taught and when and how. He thought it important that people learn from the Bible and liturgy and doctrine to come to some understanding of their religious meaning and their usefulness in daily life.¹⁷ This he thought needed to be done in ways appropriate to the age of persons and through the catechetical methods most effective in helping persons grasp the religious meaning of the traditional content.

¹⁷Hofinger, Art of Teaching Doctrine, pp. 1-48.

Cultural Influences

Several cultural influences impacted the rise of tradition-based Christian education in the United States. First, on the frontier the newness of so much of life called people into many forms of adaptation and change. The Sunday School movement represented an effort to preserve the Christian heritage and values in the face of the pressures for rapid change in so many areas of life.

Second, the 1930s marked the beginning of considerable disillusionment in the western world with human "progress." Two world wars, a depression, and mass extermination of Jews in a Christian country raised again the question of the goodness of human nature and answered the question in the negative. No longer could persons reflect such optimism about human nature or about human persons' building the Kingdom of God on earth or about God's being revealed largely through humanity. H. Shelton Smith was particularly articulate about the impact of the changing world situation. He recognized that this era of the 1940s had new pressures and crises, leading to greater discontinuities than the preceding period of economic, social, and political advancement.¹⁸ He thought the changing situation was responsible for basic questions being raised of liberalism.

¹⁸H. Shelton Smith, Faith and Nurture (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp. 64-65.

Third, new theological reflections were emerging on this historical-cultural landscape. Karl Barth was raising radical questions about the value of human achievement and about natural theology. Neo-orthodoxy was being born. The increasing influence of neo-orthodoxy called experiential education into question by questioning its overemphasis on the goodness of human nature and the immanence of God in human experience. Such leaders as H. Shelton Smith were critiquing progressive religious education sharply and seeking new approaches which would be more compatible with neo-orthodox theology. These new approaches are discussed above as one of the twentieth century shapes of education on the side of tradition. The impact of these neo-orthodox theologians was encouragement for a turning away from the authority of human experience and a turning toward Biblical authority. The impact was also a renewed emphasis on Christ and on the distinctive nature of the Christian faith and life. Under the influence of neo-orthodoxy and the emerging thought of the time, a new, more confessional era had begun.

Historical Influences within Educational Theory

Historically, tradition-based education has almost always been the dominant cultural form. This does not mean that this form of education was unaffected by emerging

thought patterns. In fact, tradition-based education was gaining considerably in sophistication at the same time that experience-based education was emerging.

Writing at the same time as Friedrich Froebel was Johann Herbart. Both of these German men were influenced by Pestalozzi, but Herbart took this influence in some different directions. Herbart focused his attention on the cognitive aspects of psychology and education and proposed a theory of learning and instruction. He, like Pestalozzi and Froebel, was concerned with developmental theory and was appreciative of the uniqueness, creativity, and formative aspects of childhood. He focused, however, on the deductive rather than the inductive methods of education. He was concerned that teachers respond to the student's personal interests and learning rhythms, but he was also concerned that teachers introduce students to a breadth of knowledge.¹⁹

Herbart was particularly influential on education with his instructional theory. He outlined steps in the instructional process, and these, though systematized further by persons who followed, guided educators for many

¹⁹Robert Ulich, History of Educational Thought (New York: American Book, 1950), pp. 272-282. Herbart's understanding of education is put forth in John Frederick Herbart, Outline of Educational Doctrine (New York: Macmillan, 1901). See also Harold B. Dunkel, Herbart and Education (New York: Random House, 1969).

years. These pedagogical steps (as adapted by later students) were: preparation, presentation, comparison (association), generalization (systematization), and application. Teaching which followed this progression was understood to be in tune with the most natural flow of students' learning. Herbart's instructional theory was very influential on both the public schools and the curriculum and methods of the Sunday School at the turn of the century in this country. Kendig Cully notes that this influence persisted longer in the fundamentalist circles than in others.²⁰

At the same time that Herbart's influence was flourishing, the Sunday School movement was exerting a major influence on the education forms in this country. As noted above, this movement was particularly impacting the churches with its tradition-based education. The largely independent lay movement was taken over by the churches in the early years of the twentieth century, and with the movement came its didactic methods, its focus on Biblical subject matter, and its goals of inculcating persons into the Christian faith and tradition.

One other historical root of tradition-oriented education should be noted. This was the catechetical model prominent in many churches since the Reformation.

²⁰Kendig B. Cully, The Search for Christian Education--Since 1940 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 102, 153-159.

Catechesis, or oral instruction, is as old as the Church itself, and in the Roman Catholic Church catechesis refers to the full Christian education or nurture process. The catechetical model referred to here arose with the advent of the printing press and the emergence of formal "catechisms," or books which present Christian doctrine in question and answer form. This question and answer form of instruction had been formalized by Martin Luther in 1529 when he wrote the Small Catechism and the Large Catechism. These catechisms provided a resource to churches and families for teaching the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith. This method of instruction became widespread and was dominant in some churches as the twentieth century began, particularly in the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Anglican Churches. This method gave attention to the instruction of traditional subject matter, and it was built on the assumption that there are fundamental principles to be conveyed to each new generation.

TRADITION AND EXPERIENCE EMPHASES IN TENSION

At no time were experience-based and tradition-based education more clearly in opposition than in the 1930s and 1940's. The differences between these perspectives were highlighted in several ways. For example, the Federal Council of Churches in 1938 made an

official statement emphasizing the role of transmitting the Christian tradition in Christian education. Two years later the official statement of the International Council of Religious Education placed emphasis on the reinterpretation and enrichment of experience.

In 1922 the International Council of Religious Education had produced the Bower Report which described religious education as centered on life situations. The Biblical tradition was seen as a source for guiding one's response to these life situations. In 1944 the focus of the Council was changed to Christian education. The new statement of the Council emphasized gospel-centeredness and the educational role of the churches. Paul Vieth's report arising from this Council described the discipline in this way: "Christian education is the process by which persons are confronted with and controlled by the Christian Gospel."²¹

The Elliott-Smith Debate

One of the most memorable debates between the experiential and traditional emphases took place in print as Harrison Elliott (representing the progressive religious

²¹Paul Vieth, The Church and Christian Education (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1947), p. 52. Since this book is a committee report, Vieth presents differing viewpoints on the various issues. The differences often reflect some of the same tensions which are dealt with in this chapter.

education perspective) and H. Shelton Smith (representing a neo-orthodox theological perspective) articulated their views of Christian education. The arguments of these two men were far more complex than will be presented here, but some of their dominant educational assumptions will be presented as they impinge on the experience-tradition polarity.

Harrison Elliott was trying in Can Religious Education Be Christian? to defend the possibility that progressive religious education can, indeed, be Christian. Writing against the background of the contemporary debate between progressive religious education and neo-orthodoxy, he set as his task to resolve some of the issues of that debate, exploring the presuppositions on both sides.

At least four of Elliott's assumptions about Christian education reflect his biases toward experiential education forms. These are:

1. That education has a role of not just passing on adult beliefs and practices, but of being reconstructive --i.e., lifting life above current standards and accomplishments. This includes facilitating persons in the reconstruction of the life they participate in, the inner Church life, and the Church's corporate action in the world.²² In short, religious education should involve both efforts

²²Elliott, pp. 225-226, 229-232.

toward bringing in the Kingdom and criticisms of those efforts. Educational strategies growing out of this are social, experience-centered, inclusive across races and classes and generations, and active in actual situations.²³

2. That education should not be individualistic in focus, but corporate--i.e., centered on corporate goals. This is what Elliott means by a "social strategy" of education.²⁴

3. That education should focus on both intellect and emotion.²⁵

4. That Biblical studies should be approached not with preconceived answers, but with real human issues in mind.

H. Shelton Smith represents much more bias toward tradition-based education. In Faith and Nurture he explored the meaning of Christian nurture in the context of faith. He appealed to what he understood to be traditional Christian faith, as it was being called freshly to our attention by neo-orthodoxy. Though he did not explicitly align himself with a particular school of neo-orthodoxy, he appealed throughout to emphases that he found in the movement. Basically, he was critiquing progressive, or liberal,

²³Ibid., pp. 213, 229-232, 251-258.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 205-211. ²⁵Ibid., p. 205.

religious education from the standpoint of traditional Christian belief. His thrust was far more in the direction of critique than of redefinition, though he was attempting to lay some groundwork for the redefining task.

Smith was trying to put forth the directions for the critique and reconstruction of Christian nurture. He pointed to some directions, but did not really spell them out. That work would need to follow. Below are some of the educational assumptions to which he pointed, and he would consider these to be of importance to any reformulation of religious education or Christian nurture. Smith assumed:

1. That education is not the answer to complex social problems, nor to salvation or self-help.²⁶
2. That the focal point of curriculum should not be social relations.²⁷
3. That religious education should be based on the conviction of the revelation in Jesus Christ and on the theory of human value derived from God.²⁸
4. That religious education must live in the tension between the present church and the Kingdom of God, actively nurturing in the faith, but recognizing the far greater fullness of the coming Kingdom.²⁹

²⁶Smith, pp. 60, 114-135. ²⁷Ibid., p. 46.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 114, 79. ²⁹Ibid., pp. 146-151.

5. That Christian nurture derives from Christian doctrine, which is radically different from progressive democratic education. Smith believed that Dewey's emphasis on democratic education and religion was in conflict with Judaeo-Christian faith.³⁰

The Debate Goes On

The discussion among persons at these poles of opinion is not so clearcut as it once was, but it is by no means dead. Clear traces of the progressive point of view are evidenced in the writings of Ross Snyder, Paul Irwin, and others. Likewise, the emphases of Howard Grimes, James Smart, and others are more in tune with the tradition-based point of view of Smith. Grouping these people together poses dangers of oversimplification, so one must hastily add that the similarity within each group breaks down when these persons are compared on grounds other than their basic orientation to historical tradition and contemporary experience.

An interesting illustration, for example, is provided by two books on youth ministry--Paul Irwin's The Care and Counseling of Youth in the Church and Gabriel Fackre and Jan Chartier's Youth Ministry: The Gospel and the

³⁰Ibid., pp. 181f.

People. Irwin begins his book with an emphasis on the interpersonal nature of ministry, and he weaves developmental concerns throughout his presentation. He proposes a model of youth ministry arising from the value of persons as individuals and as a community. His model is largely focused on the present experience of the youth and adults ministering with them.³¹ On the other hand, Gabriel Fackre, a systematic theologian, co-authors a book in which the two sections ("The Gospel" and "The People") are side by side, but not interwoven. Fackre derives his understanding of human nature, the church, and the models of ministry from historical tradition. The tradition, then, is his starting point, and youth ministry is defined in terms of persons' relationship to the Christian story.³² The dichotomy between Irwin and Fackre breaks down if pushed hard because both recognize the significance of historical tradition and present experience in youth ministry. The difference is really one of emphasis.

A similar difference can be seen if one compares the writings of Ross Snyder and James Michael Lee. Snyder proposes a model of education which begins with the life

³¹Paul Irwin, The Care and Counseling of Youth in the Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

³²Gabriel Fackre and Jan Chartier, Youth Ministry (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1979).

experience of participants. He is very concerned with the connections between that present experience and what has gone before and what will come after. His emphasis, however, is on the meaning of the experienced moments, rather than on the communication of certain historical theological concepts, values, or norms. Standing in contrast with this approach to Christian education is the model developed by James Michael Lee. Lee is most concerned with religious instruction, that is, with increasing the sophistication by which religion is taught. He makes maximal use of the social sciences in guiding the instructional and evaluation process. His emphasis is similar to that of Herbart. He is less concerned with inductive education and subjective interpretation of present experience, and more concerned with creating those experiences (through curriculum, pedagogical method, and so forth) which produce learning of the religious content and behavior. Lee states: "The classroom becomes a laboratory for Christian living, a planned and operationalized milieu for facilitating in the students desired changes in behavior."³³

³³James Michael Lee, The Shape of Religious Instruction (Mishawaka, IN: Religious Education Press, 1971), p. 218.

SHAPES OF EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE

The issues discussed here are hardly relevant to the practice of Christian religious education if they are not issues, also, in the educational practice of the churches. The polarization between historical tradition and contemporary experience is, in fact, prominent in the life of faith communities. It emerges in many forms, but four questions which particularly reflect this polarization will be considered here.

1. Are our children learning the Bible, or do they just play in their educational activities? This is a question very familiar to Christian educators, even in those churches where the Bible is not understood to be the sole source of God's revelation--the sole authority for Christian faith. Underlying this question is the assumption that the focus of Christian religious education is to be the transmission of the Biblical content, and that other activities may distract from this central goal.

2. Are our people learning the essentials of the Christian faith and life, or do we simply get together for social experiences? This kind of question surfaces in many faith communities, including those churches which are not doctrinal and which do not have a clearly articulated set of "essential" beliefs and practices. This question comes

out of two primary assumptions: That there are certain Christian beliefs and practices to be taught and learned, and that Christian faith is transmitted not through social experience, but through telling people what to do and their doing it.

3. Why can't we do away with archaic and oppressive educational settings and forms and let the church community educate through its worship and corporate action?

This question emerges particularly from emphases on socialization models of education. The assumptions behind this particular question are: (a) that direct, purposeful, and communal experience takes the place of systematic study, and (b) that the Church School setting itself is limited to certain forms of instruction which are fundamentally incompatible with such intrinsically rewarding and corporate experience. In other words, the Sunday School or study settings are seen to be essentially irrelevant to the education process. The assumption is that education can be done much more effectively through other means.

4. Why can't the education of the church be relevant to the real issues that people face in their lives rather than focusing so much on irrelevant theological concepts? This question leads into the perennial argument for starting with the life experience of the learners and communicating only what is relevant to those life experiences. Assumed in this question is the idea that the

Biblical and historical tradition should only be studied when clearly and directly relevant to some aspect of the life experience of the learners. Hence, the history of the church would not necessarily be taught to older children or early teens because of inadequate linkage with the immediate life concerns of these young people.

Any of these four questions listed here suggests an either-or dichotomy. The first two suggest that education needs to be transmissive of a certain body of historical and unchanging tradition. The last two suggest that education needs to be built more on the contemporary experiences of persons--both the experiences in the faith community and the experiences of the people in their everyday lives.

One would be naive not to recognize the values of these shifts in emphases at particular times and places. Persons arguing for one side or the other of the polarity are often speaking from their own skewed experience with the other pole. This does not warrant, however, a resignation to a "swinging pendulum" theory which accepts the inevitability of alternating educational emphases between the poles of historical tradition and contemporary experience. We will now turn to a brief look at some of the persons who have attempted to push beyond this dichotomy in educational theory and practice.

MOVEMENTS TOWARD SYNTHESIS

Concern over these dichotomies is not new. Many educators have attempted to avoid the either/or choice between education for continuity with historical tradition and education for change based on present experience.

John Dewey

We began with John Dewey's cry against such dualism, so we can appropriately begin now with his own attempt to resolve the dilemma. Though Dewey was a major catalyst in experiential education, he attempted in his later years to escape the tradition-experience dichotomy by articulating a philosophy of experience. He thought that if the idea of experience were properly conceived, adequate account would be taken of the historical tradition in the educational process.³⁴ Dewey saw this as possible if adequate attention were given to the quality of experience. By quality he meant both the immediate agreeableness of the experience and its effect on the future.³⁵

Dewey elaborated his theory of experience by lifting up two principal criteria for assessing the value of any experience. The first criterion was whether or not the

³⁴Dewey, pp. 25-31, 89-90.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 27-28, 49-50.

experience leads to growth. Dewey appealed here to the principle of continuity, asserting "that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after."³⁶ The continuity of experience is inevitable because present experience is always linked to the past and future. The important question is whether the continuity contributes to the continuation of growing. Note that for Dewey this meant that the educational process must always be planned with an eye to future growth. He was interested, for example, that present educational experiences contribute to persons' future experiences by increasing their options, their openness to new experiences, and so forth. In his principle of continuity Dewey was suggesting the inherent relatedness of past, present, and future. The past helps us to understand the present, and the future is the testing ground for the value of present experiences. Dewey was also suggesting the very practical need for educators to anticipate the problems and issues that their students will later face and to be guided in part by these in designing the educational process. He hoped that the present work of educators would be fruitful by helping persons to grow and by changing external conditions to be more conducive to further growth. Education, then, was viewed by Dewey as

³⁶Ibid., p. 35.

a continuing process of reconstructing experience, informed always by what has gone before and what will come after.

The second criterion for Dewey was whether the experience involves interaction between objective and internal conditions.³⁷ By this he meant interaction between the objective knowledge of the past and social structures, and the internal needs and desires of the students. Dewey was recognizing the importance of persons' gaining knowledge and learning to organize facts and ideas.³⁸ He was also recognizing the importance of these facts and ideas' being connected to persons' own experiences. Further, Dewey was suggesting that education needs to be an interactive and social experience in which both students and teachers are part. In other words, the learning situation is not to be dominated by either students or teachers, but is to be a situation of "mutual accommodation and adaptation."³⁹ All of this would suggest that education needs to be informed by both developmental theory (concerned primarily with internal conditions of students) and learning and instructional theory (concerned primarily with external conditions of the experience).

John Dewey did indeed go far in his later writing in conceiving of education beyond dichotomies of either/or.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 42, 45. ³⁸Ibid., pp. 82, 73-75.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 58-60.

Thomas Groome has recently bemoaned, however, that Dewey's "call for a synthesis . . . has continued to be more honored in the breach than in the observance."⁴⁰ Groome thinks this may be due to his failure to "spell out a teaching methodology that would bring about such balance between the disciplines of knowledge and present experience."⁴¹

Contemporary Syntheses

In recent years educational theories and methods have emerged which are conceived to bring together these two poles in Christian education. Three dominant forms of theory have emerged, each offering its own unique mode of synthesis.

Socialization Theories

Ellis Nelson and John Westerhoff have aroused considerable interest in their socialization models of education. They have stirred freshly a sense of the value of historical tradition in Christian education and the dynamic and communal process of handing it on. In so doing, they have given attention to the unity of historical tradition and contemporary experience. This is illustrated nowhere

⁴⁰Thomas H. Groome, "Christian Education: A Task of Present Dialectical Hermeneutics," Living Light, XIV, 3 (Fall 1977), 412.

⁴¹Ibid.

better than in Westerhoff's quote of Nelson:

" . . . Faith is communicated by a community of believers and the meaning of faith is developed by its members out of their history, by their interaction with each other, and in relation to the events that take place in their lives."⁴²

Westerhoff's emphasis has been on the communal context of Christian education, recognizing the need to break out of narrow schooling/instructional models and "focus our attention on the radical nature and character of the church as a faith community."⁴³ He calls attention to the role of community life in Christian education, including the rites, the interactions, the actions in the world, and the liturgy.⁴⁴ Westerhoff suggests that Christians are called to be a community of change--to be in the world but not of the world. At the same time, however, he holds up the shared memory and vision of the Christian community, and he urges the transmission of the Christian story as our story.

Nelson has focused even more directly on the nature of the union between historical tradition and contemporary

⁴² John H. Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith? (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 51. This quote was taken from Nelson, Where Faith Begins, p. 10.

⁴³ Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith? p. 51.

⁴⁴ See particularly, John H. Westerhoff and Gwen K. Neville, Generation to Generation (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974); and Gwen K. Neville and John H. Westerhoff, Learning Through Liturgy (New York: Seabury Press, 1978).

experience. He suggests that the connector between the past and present is tradition.⁴⁵ He sees tradition as the very process of transmission. Biblical tradition, for example, includes two elements: "the tradition that is handed down and the experience that individuals and groups have as they live, modify, and pass on the tradition."⁴⁶ Thus tradition is continually formed and reformed.⁴⁷ It is not just something from the past, but is a dynamic part of the community in the present. This calls for more intentional focus on tradition and its process. For Nelson:

Both the conservation and the creative adaptation of tradition are bound up in the dynamic process of passing it on. Therefore, we must be much clearer about the way in which we use events that are happening--and events we cause to happen--as the key to our communication of faith.⁴⁸

In all of this Nelson's attention is on past and present rather than on future.

Nelson contributes another important element to the tradition and experience discussions. He gives particular attention to the question of revelation, the unique experience of God which makes persons more aware of their tradition and enables them also to critique and change that tradition. This is the kind of experience which helps persons

⁴⁵Nelson, Where Faith Begins, p. 69.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 79.

⁴⁷Nelson, "Our Oldest Problem," p. 60.

⁴⁸Nelson, Where Faith Begins, p. 94.

transcend themselves and their culture. It is that experience which "breaks through the culture and gives the receiver a meaningful word about himself and the human situation for which he must take responsibility."⁴⁹ This question of revelation is the one which Nelson, in his later writing, sees as the problematic one. Nelson is concerned that Christian education open persons in some way to revelation as well as transmit tradition so that it can inform and form their experience.⁵⁰

Dialogical Theories

A more dialogical point of view has emerged in education, partially in reaction against the socialization model, particularly against the danger in that model of romanticizing a community's perpetuating itself uncritically with all of its inadequacies.⁵¹ In the dialogical point of view education is conceived as a process of opening the present to both the past and the future.

Thomas Groome has put forth a dialogical model of Christian education which he calls "critical reflection on

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 87.

⁵⁰Nelson, "Our Oldest Problem," pp. 61, 65.

⁵¹Thomas H. Groome, "The Critical Principle in Christian Education and the Task of Prophecy," Religious Education, LXXII, 3 (May-June 1977), 262-266.

shared praxis."⁵³ Groome sees the starting point of education as the present experience and action of persons. Persons are to reflect on this experience in light of the community's tradition, or story, and its vision of the Kingdom of God. The community's story serves as a critique of persons' present experience, and as a guide to future action. At the same time the present experience of persons serves as a critique of the community's tradition and may lead to its revision. In his model Groome takes seriously the prophetic role of Christian education in opening the way for the Christian community to be transformed. In his model he takes more seriously the cognitive, futuristic, and reconstructive elements of Christian education than do the advocates of religious socialization.

Another theory which could be called dialogical has been suggested by Mary Boys. Boys speaks of religious education as "making accessible" both tradition and transformation.⁵³ She emphasizes the inseparability of these

⁵²Ibid., pp. 266-268. This model is developed extensively in Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980). The emphasis on dialogue and the unity of action and reflection is shared with Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp. 75f.

⁵³Mary C. Boys, "Access to Traditions and Transformation," in O'Hare, pp. 9-34.

dynamics and the importance of religious education's opening access to the past and to the critical interpretation and reconstruction of that past in the present.

Transcending Theories

Still another category of theory which rises valiantly above the stark dichotomizing of historical tradition and contemporary experience is what I am calling the "transcending theories." Philip Phenix has used this word transcendence as a way of interpreting education.⁵⁴ Interestingly, the emphasis on the relationship between education and transcendence has appeared less in the religious education literature per se, and more in the literature of the philosophy of education. Two brilliant presentations of this emphasis are found in Dwayne Huebner and in Bernard Meland.

Huebner calls strongly for a critique of educators' preoccupation with objectives and learning. He recognizes education's indebtedness to modern technology and the social sciences for these concepts, but he calls attention instead to what he sees as the often neglected aspect of education--the "moment of vision":

⁵⁴Philip Phenix, "Transcendence and the Curriculum," in William Pinar (ed.) Curriculum Theorizing (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975), pp. 323f.

Neither of the categories--objectives nor learning--provides guidelines for the third essential ingredient of the education environment: the moment of vision. The student, either by his own understanding or that of others, must be able to envision his own projected potentiality for being as it exists in the past-present-future. This is the uniquely human quality of the environment and requires the presence of human wisdom. This is the unique function of the teacher, the human aspect of that specific educational environment, who shares the rhythms of continuity and change, of necessity and freedom, with his students.⁵⁵

For Huebner, this possibility of self-transcendence is itself a dimension of the education process which transcends the limits placed by educators who are solely concerned with objectives and learning.

Another voice which calls out for this possibility of self-transcendence is Bernard Meland. Meland's central concern is with what he calls "appreciative consciousness," which is a creative openness to the values of the past and to the possibilities of the present and future. Meland describes appreciative consciousness as:

. . . the creative response in man which relates him seriously to the creative passage and to the emerging events which ensue. . . . [I]t is concerned simultaneously with past qualitative attainment, and the mystery and possibility of the new.⁵⁶

Meland holds forth an ideal of human spirit in which the

⁵⁵Dwayne Huebner, "Curriculum as Concern for Man's Temporality," in Pinar, p. 249.

⁵⁶Bernard E. Meland, Higher Education and the Human Spirit (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 51.

appreciative consciousness is nurtured both through critical inquiry and affective imagination.⁵⁷ For him the critical and imaginative, the scientific and artistic, need to be integrated in the human spirit for the kind of responsiveness that is both possible and ideal for human persons.

Maria Harris suggests that the note of transcendence in education addresses the dichotomizing of tradition and transformation in religious education by making us aware that the tradition is existent in the lives of the people and is continually being recreated. She understands religious education as facilitating this dynamic relationship between tradition and transformation through word, sacrament, and prophecy.⁵⁸ Harris does not, however, elaborate how she understands transcendence.

Among religious educators, two of the prominent voices speaking of transcendence of the self have been Lewis Sherrill and Ross Snyder. Sherrill understood the essential nature of the self as vital, self-determining, self-conscious, and self-transcendent. The ministry of Christian education needs, therefore, to be holistic in its view of human persons and in its view of ministry itself. In

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 79-109.

⁵⁸ Maria Harris, "Word, Sacrament, Prophecy," in O'Hare, pp. 35-57.

addition, Christian education must be relational, based on a philosophy of encounter and recognizing that persons are indeed confronted by God, by other persons, and by themselves. Sherrill described Christian education as "the attempt to participate in and guide the changes which take place in persons in their relationships with God, with the church, with other persons, with the physical world, and with oneself."⁵⁹ Revelation and interaction play key roles in Sherrill's understanding, and Christian religious education is itself a transcending activity as persons encounter God, other persons, and themselves.

Similarly Ross Snyder has emphasized the transcendent nature of human existence--the sense in which being human involves relating deeply with others and with God. In Young People and Their Culture he emphasizes the inseparability of being human and being interconscious, by which he meant the meeting of another person subject to subject. Interconsciousness is an interpersonal giving and receiving of meaning.⁶⁰ In his later writing Snyder maintains this deeply interpersonal emphasis, illustrated particularly as he artistically penetrates Anton Boisen's understanding

⁵⁹ Lewis Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 145.

⁶⁰ Ross Snyder, Young People and Their Culture (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 53.

of religious experience.⁶¹ The interpersonal is for Snyder, as for Sherrill, a means by which self transcends self as persons interpenetrate the life worlds of one another. Snyder's emphasis on the transcendent in later unpublished writing is focused still more on the encounter with God:

At times in my life
The Greatest-Than-Self whammed me
Startled me out of everydayness
Awakened previously untapped energies
Set me on a wild journey thru uncharted
wilderness
In company with gods of creation and
destruction.⁶²

For Snyder, as for Huebner, Meland, Harris, and Sherrill, education is itself a process in which people are engaged in the fullness of life and in all of its transcendent encounters and possibilities.

Polarities in Transition

With all of these new developments in education theory, the tendency to dichotomize continuity and change persists in educational practice. Perhaps, we have not sufficiently "mined" the theories for educational implications. Perhaps, with Letty Russell, we must recognize

⁶¹Ross Snyder, "Boisen's Understanding of Religious Experience," Chicago Theological Seminary Register, LXVII, 1 (1977), 33-51.

⁶²Ross Snyder, "A Lifetask of Senior Adulthood" (paper presented at the School of Theology at Claremont, February 1980)

"the gap between such a synthesis in theory and in educational practice."⁶³ Creating a synthesis in practice may be more difficult than in theory, and some of the practical dimensions of the problem may not even have been addressed yet. Perhaps, more has been accomplished in stating the problem than in suggesting resolution.

The description of the state of the continuity/change dualism leaves many unanswered questions. Even in the impressive collection of essays in Tradition and Transformation in Religious Education, the problem is primarily stated in terms of the past-present polarity with little attention to the relationship of either to future. Even more important, the suggested educational theories and methods are left still in skeletal form. The issue has certainly been highlighted and brought into clearer focus, but the insights in these essays have yet to be fully developed. Huebner has expressed a similar concern in his concluding response to these essays--that the issue of tradition and transformation has yet to be considered in the context of nonacademic religious communities and the actions and questions of educational practitioners.⁶⁴ Huebner also calls for attention to be given to the

⁶³ Russell, p. 73.

⁶⁴ Dwayne Huebner, "The Language of Religious Education," in O'Hare, pp. 98-99.

historical precedents of educational language in hopes that a more public language might emerge for religious education.⁶⁵ This would be a language in tune with the questions and thinking of both clergy and laity, educators and educatees, and adults and children.

The challenge before us, then, is the assimilation of insights from all of these who have spoken and a reaching out toward fresh insight and direction. Wide agreement seems to exist in Christian religious education that attention needs to be given to both historical tradition and contemporary experience, to both continuity and change. What seems to be lacking is the assimilation of insights from the several directions and the reformulation of educational theory and practice

CONCLUSIONS FOR EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

The visions presented here are rich in possibilities for Christian religious education. Some conclusions may be drawn from these to inform the traditioning model being developed here. Indeed, the conclusions form some of the basic assumptions underlying that theory. These assumptions are:

1. That the tendency to dichotomize tradition and experience is real and is not easily overcome by pleas to

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 38-96, 109-111.

rise above it. The sheer number of educational theorists who have given attention to the problem directly or indirectly testifies to that fact. The problem has been with us for centuries and does not promise to retreat quickly or quietly.

2. That the tradition/experience dichotomy is essentially a false one, in that understanding either side deeply leads a person into the other. John Dewey's rich understanding of experience led him in his later years to conceive of education with a significant role given to historical tradition and disciplines of knowledge. These were conceived as important factors in enabling persons to understand and organize their present experiences. Similarly, Ellis Nelson has probed deeply into the meaning of tradition, particularly the Biblical tradition. He has concluded that tradition itself is dynamic, including both that which is handed down from the past and the experience of persons in the present as they hand it down and live it. Further, both Nelson and Boys have recognized the inevitable impact of historical tradition in forming and interpreting our present experience.

3. That past, present, and future are all vital to the subject matter of Christian religious education. We need to look to the past because it has formed us. We need, as Nelson urges, to enable our past to inform us as

well.⁶⁶ It is this past that provides us with knowledge that can help us to discover our roots and to interpret and to interpret and organize our present experience. It is this past, also, that confronts us from outside our immediate experience so that we may learn who we are. As Boys suggests, "It is not the hearer who interprets the parable, but the parable which interprets the hearer."⁶⁷

We need, also, to look to the present--the contemporary life of the faith community which carries and modifies the tradition in its very living of it. Not only that, but the present includes the experience of contemporary culture, which affects the life of the faith community and is affected by it. We need to envision education which responds to the heartbeat of that cultural context, as did Coe and Dewey and the leaders of the Sunday School movement. The present must also include the present experience of God--a recognition of God's continuing involvement in the world and an openness to God's continuing revelation. Meland's concern with appreciative consciousness and Nelson's interest in revelation call attention to this vital aspect of present experience.

Finally, we need to look to the future, both in terms of our hopes and vision of God's future and our

⁶⁶Nelson, "Our Oldest Problem," p. 65.

⁶⁷Boys, p. 27.

anticipation of the problems and issues which will be facing our globe. Thomas Groome's model of Christian religious education as shared praxis is very similar to those earlier progressive models of Bower and Elliott, but he adds the very important focus on eschatology--on the Christian vision of the Kingdom of God. Dewey has emphasized another aspect of the future focus in education, that is, the anticipated issues of the future (such as the anticipated necessity for more radical energy conservation or for new forms of living in human community). Education, then, should be designed around the past and present experiences of persons and cultures, and also around those anticipated crises, questions, and decisions. These emphases on the future can perhaps help us overcome our preoccupation with the immediate relevance of education and our often narrow focus on one particular community or social context for our education efforts.

4. That Christian religious education must tap the resources of both critical reflection and imagination.

These dual themes are particularly lifted up by Bernard Meland, Mary Boys, and Maria Harris as movements which enrich one another. Christian education must be conceived as critical reflection--bringing to bear all the knowledge of the past and present and critically evaluating and drawing from it. Christian education must also stir imagination--

jolting persons out of the expected and routine into participation in mystery.

5. That Christian religious education must be a social and interactive experience in which the entire faith community is involved and in which both teachers and students are dynamic participants. This would suggest that education is informed both by developmental theory (concerned primarily with internal conditions of the participants) and learning and instructional theories (concerned primarily with teaching methods and external conditions such as the physical environment).

6. That the assumptions underlying educational theory and practice must be reexamined in every era. H. Shelton Smith and Harrison Elliott made a valuable contribution in doing that kind of analysis of their two points of view in the 1940s. We must look behind any model to the educational, theological, philosophical, and social-psychological assumptions on which it is built. This is, the way we can critique and revise. For example, we can perceive in retrospect some of the assumptions of our predecessors, such as George Albert Coe and leaders of the Sunday School movement. In recognizing the valuable social function of Coe's model of progressive religious education in an emerging technical-democratic society, and the function of the Sunday School movement on the frontier,

we must remember the limitations of both of those models to the social, political, and theological assumptions of their particular social contexts. In drawing from those models we must recognize the ways in which the present context is different and we must respond to the particular needs and issues of a new era, always questioning our own assumptions as well.

7. That Christian religious education can be a visionary discipline, seeking faith visions in Christian tradition, contemporary experience, and future hope. Much of tradition-oriented education has sought to apply the knowledge of tradition to particular problems of contemporary life. Much of experience-based education has sought to understand contemporary problems and reach into the historical tradition and contemporary knowledge for answers. Both are thereby limited to problems and, often, to a bias that the answers are usually in historical tradition. What might emerge if we sought faith visions in the past, present, and future of the Christian Story, rather than problems and solutions?

PART II

FOUNDATIONS FOR A MODEL

Whatever else can be said, Christian religious education always takes place in a community of faith and involves persons as participants in the educational process. Understanding the nature of that community and those persons becomes extremely important to the design of a new model of education.

Reexamining these foundations of Christian religious education will certainly involve upsetting some apple carts. What is hoped is that such a turning over will lead to careful examination of the apples, including some which have been lost on the bottom, and also, a careful examination of the upturned carts. The ideas and practices which have been carried in our models of Christian community and human persons must not be lost, but must be examined freshly. The hope here is that this examination will lead to the construction of new carts. The hope is that these new carts may be more adequate for carrying the apple riches of the past and those yet to be harvested. The hope is, too, that these new models of Christian community and human persons will provide more adequate foundations for a model of Christian religious education--one which avoids the dichotomizing that was so characteristic of many of its

predecessors.

We will examine the nature of the traditioning community in Chapter 3 and the nature of the person in process in Chapter 4.

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Chapter 3

THE TRADITIONING COMMUNITY

We begin this examination of foundations by struggling to define the nature of the Christian community and its relationship to the continuity and change question. The Christian Church has often been recognized as a preserving community or as an agent of change. Many debates have taken place in the Church's history over the conflict between these two points of view. No clear answer exists to resolve this tension, but God help us if the tension ever gives way to one pole or the other.

The title of this chapter is "The Traditioning Community." This suggests a choice for the continuity pole, but do not be so easily deceived. Tradition, as suggested in Chapter 1, is a process of handing over God's gifts. If God had acted only in the past, then tradition would simply involve preserving the past. But if God has acted in the past, is acting now, and will act in the future, then tradition involves living in a stream of history--keeping alive the memory, participating in God's present action, and hoping for God's future.

We will here examine the nature of this traditioning community by exploring some historical images of the Church, the historical nature of the Christian community,

and the functions of historical tradition and contemporary experience in that community. A perspective on the Church as a "traditioning community" will be elaborated, which takes account of the rich imagery and historical nature of the Christian community and which fosters the Church's sense of its own past, present, and future.

HISTORICAL IMAGES OF THE CHURCH

The Church cannot easily be explained in one word or phrase. It is a community defined by many images and shapes. Both in the Bible and in the history of the church these images have existed together in different combinations with different emphases.

The Biblical word usually translated as Church is ekklesia. Ekklesia refers to the "called out ones," or the assembled people of God who are heirs to God's promises of the Kingdom. This word can refer to a particular local congregation or to the universal Church. Whichever reference is made, the ekklesia is the people of God who are summoned or called out, who gather, and who look toward God's future Kingdom.

A related term is laos, which translates as "people of God" and which is often used to refer to God's chosen people.¹ The English word "laity" obscures the full

¹Macquarrie has built his understanding of the Christian community and the theological task of that

meaning of laos. The term laity has come to refer to persons who are not clergy, rather than to persons who are part of the people of God. The term laos suggests a relatedness to God and a participation in God's creation.

Two other words appear frequently in the New Testament description of Church. These are koinonia and diakonia. The koinonia is a fellowship or sharing community, who are bound together by their common relationship to God. This is a group who share together in the gifts of God and who share with each other in real, concrete ways (e.g., the sharing of possessions in the early church). Referring back to the understanding of tradition put forth in Chapter 1, this is the community which has been given the Tradition and which is called to pass it on. They share together in that gift and in that task.

The diakonia is the serving people--the people who are called to minister to each other and who are sent out into the world to serve. In the New Testament this word sometimes refers to certain leaders in the community who had particular roles in serving the people. The word was also used to refer to the whole serving community. Everyone in the community was called to serve both within the community itself and outside of it. They were called to

community on this concept of laos. The people of God provides the starting point of theological reflection. See: John Macquarrie, The Faith of the People of God (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), pp. 16-23.

serve the physical and spiritual needs of persons all around them.

Two other dimensions are associated in the New Testament with the life of the Christian community--the kerygma and the leitourgia. The kerygma was understood to be the announcement of the Good News of Jesus Christ, or the proclamation of the gospel message. It included both the message itself and the proclaiming of it. The early Christian community was a proclaiming community with a message to share. The hymn "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations" captures some of that burning sense of a message to tell and a desire to tell it.

The leitourgia was understood to be the liturgical life of the community. One finds in many accounts of the early church a reference to worship--to the hymns and prayers and sacraments of that community. The Christian community, then, is the people of God called out--the people who are engaged in sharing, serving, proclaiming, and worshipping.

In short, the imagery of the New Testament church is rich, and when one considers this imagery in light of the Old Testament imagery of the people of God, the shapes become even richer. This is the community which is sought by God, even when undeserving. This is the community which is created, delivered, guided, commanded, chastised, and

promised by God. This is the community of the covenant.

The history of the Church builds on this early history and is marked by similar richness of images. Avery Dulles reviews five major models of the Church functioning in Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Dulles notes the coexistence of these models in various combinations and the tendency in the history of the Church to swing from one emphasis or one combination of emphases to another. The models he describes are: the Church as Institution, as Mystical Communion, as Sacrament, as Herald, and as Servant. Each of these models catches up a variety of Biblical and historical images of the church, and each has functioned in various parts of the Church. Dulles sees this variety of models as necessary and valuable:

The peculiarity of models, as contrasted with aspects, is that we cannot integrate them into a single synthetic vision on the level of articulate, categorical thought. In order to do justice to the various aspects of the church, as a complex reality, we must work simultaneously with different models.²

Again, the richness of ideas about the church is evident.

The problem that this plethora of images leaves for the church is clear. What is the Church? How can you boil your answer down to one easy formula that everyone can learn and understand? You cannot, and that is the problem.

²Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), p. 8.

Images are abundant, and no one image is without some mystery. Paul Minear reviews approximately one hundred New Testament images of the Church and notes that no writer has seemed inclined "to reduce the profusion to order, to weave the various strands into a single tapestry, or to arrange the kinds of figurative language into a neat pattern."³ Moreover, Minear recognizes the value of such a profusion of images.

The purpose of every comparison is to point beyond itself. The greater the number of comparisons, the greater the number of pointers. When so many separate pointers impel our eyes to look in one direction, our comprehension of the magnitude of what lies in that direction is enhanced.⁴

A similar point of view is held by Avery Dulles, who emphasizes the mystery of the Church. The mystery is approached through analogies in the form of various models, but it can never be summarized by any one model, or even one combination. For Dulles:

[The term mystery] implies that the Church is not fully intelligible to the finite mind of man, and that the reason for this lack of intelligibility is not the poverty but the richness of the Church itself.⁵

And so we are left with profusion, but we are also left with some ambiguity. Phrases like "Body of Christ" and "People of God" and "Community of the Spirit" are very

³ Paul Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 221-222.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 222-223. ⁵ Dulles, p. 15.

suggestive. They are rich in pictures and ideas, but they are not easy to grasp. Every time you turn the phrase a different way you get a new elusiveness, and one could say that in some sense it escapes definition. This accounts for disagreements in churches about the nature and mission of the church. One faction is thoroughly convinced that the Church exists to serve the physical needs of the world (God's creation). Another faction is equally convinced that the Church exists to provide a centering place of worship for the Christian community. Still another faction believes that the Church is only the Church when it is preaching the gospel to those who need to hear it and calling persons to repentance and belief. These disagreements are very real and have led to schisms and divisions throughout the history of the Church.

To say that the Christian community escapes definition is not to say, however, that we cannot say anything about it. Quite to the contrary, we can never say enough about it. It will always be larger than our words. With that recognition we launch into a study of the historical nature of the Christian community. To talk about education for continuity and change is to assume that the Christian community in which education takes place is an historical community--with a past and a present and a future. The understanding of that community will influence the model of education developed here.

HISTORICAL NATURE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The Christian community does indeed have a past, present, and future, but these do not exist as three isolated bits of time. Neither do they meld together so as to lose their distinctiveness. The past affects and becomes part of the present and future, but it is still past. Likewise the future has helped form the past and is now forming the present, but the future is still future. It is not yet. The church lives in the midst of a living stream of tradition deeply influenced by this past and future and by its present life. What is the nature of this Church then?

Related to God

The Christian Church is the community called by God, the ekklesia (the called out and gathered community) or the laos (the people of God). This is the community which transforms its own experience of God (revelation) into universal expression.

In this relationship with God mystery does indeed exist, but this relationship is not an abstraction. It finds expression in real and concrete ways. As persons function in a prophetic role, the personal experience of God is transformed into acts in the social order--cries

for social justice, acts of mercy, work toward social reform. Witness Moses and the prophets whose personal experience of God transformed them and transformed the social order through them. As persons function in a priestly role, the personal or community experience of God is transformed into ritual. This ritual then becomes available to be shared more widely in the form of psalms, hymns, and sacramental acts.

Related to the World

The Christian Church exists in the world and for the world. It is called out from the world (ekklesia) and sent back into the world (diakonia) and formed by it, so that the rituals, the music, the self-understanding, and the work of that community are influenced by its social-historical context.

The Church stands in relationship to the world of past, present and future. The influence of present events and cultural practices on the life of the church is inevitable. The Church often responds directly to these events and practices, and its own work and life reflect these. In the last chapter we saw how the industrial revolution and optimistic spirit in the late nineteenth century United States influenced the advent of liberal theology and progressive religious education. Likewise, we saw how

the two world wars and depression in the twentieth century influenced the advent of neo-orthodoxy and neo-orthodox formulations of Christian education.

We must also recognize that what is expected in the future or what has occurred in the past influences the world of past, present, and future of the Church as much as does the present world situation. For example, the fear of world war, mounting problems of hunger, or economic disaster influences the Church's understanding of its mission so that persons who previously thought the Church had no role in politics begin to affirm the need of the church to take an active political role. Similarly certain worship practices (e.g., the use of icons or candles) may be associated with certain past experiences of a religious group and may, therefore, be rejected as inappropriate to Christian worship. The same practices may seem quite appropriate to another religious group with another history. For the first group, the rejection of these practices may be tantamount to rejecting aspects of its past experience within the larger culture (e.g., other religious groups) which they consider non-Christian or destructive of the most important Christian values. For the second group, the practices may seem quite compatible with their own past experiences and understanding of Christian value.

The Church's relationship to the world has always

been a dialectical one. The Church stands apart from the world and yet in it. The Church stands over against the world and in ministry to this world, and yet the people of the Church are themselves living in the world and formed by its influences. Hence, many Christian festivals have taken into themselves practices that were part of various cultural groups at a particular time and place. At the same time the Christian Church has often rejected such practices. It has critiqued the culture and defined itself in opposition to certain cultural influences. It has been engaged throughout its history in acts of both cultural assimilation and social change.

Bearer of Tradition

Tradition itself is historical in that it is a process taking place in history. As pointed out in Chapter 1, the Christian community is gifted by God with Tradition and is also given the responsibility for passing this on through the process of tradition.

The Church's role in passing on tradition is reflected in its sacramental life, in which the meaning of the sacrament is passed on in the ritual acts. Whether the sacrament of the eucharist is viewed as re-presentation of Christ's body and blood or as a memorial of Christ's death for humanity, the community is recognizing in that

sacrament the gift of God freely given in Christ and passed on through the sacramental acts of the Christian Church.

The Church's role in passing on tradition is also reflected in its preaching and teaching. These functions of proclaiming and imparting the community's wisdom have been important dimensions of the church since its inception. The preaching and teaching have not been seen as empty demonstrations of verbal skill or as formalities separated from the life of the community. Rather, the preaching and teaching have been understood to be at the heart of the Christian community as it engages in passing on the gifts of God. For example, the Apostles' Creed was taught in the early Church to persons preparing for baptism. At baptism these persons said that creed as part of the ritual. That creed was not understood simply as human teaching, and learning the creed was not understood as just one more task to accomplish. The creed was itself a symbol of the gifts of God (Tradition) given first to the apostles and by them to others and by them to others and so forth. The idea that the creed actually derived from the twelve apostles faded by the end of the Middle Ages (and far earlier among the best minds) but still the creed symbolically represented apostolic faith which is delivered and received at baptism.⁶ What is passed on, then, is the

⁶Yves M.-J. Congar, Tradition and Traditions (New

gifts of God delivered through Christ to the world and continually delivered through persons to each other. Teaching, then, is a means of passing on the tradition--continuing the handing over of the gifts of God. What would happen if we took our preaching and teaching this seriously?

Living Toward the Future

The Christian community is not only related to God and the world and the bearer of tradition, but it is also a community which lives toward the future. It is a community of promise and of mission. The promise of the Kingdom of God was the guiding image for the New Testament church and this image has been renewed in various forms throughout Christian history. The centrality of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' own preaching and teaching suggests that we cannot carry on the work of Christ without taking seriously the Kingdom, which is both present and future. The theologians of hope and liberation theologians are today calling us to take very seriously what this means for the Christian community.

Jürgen Moltmann in particular has recognized the significance of the Christian community as a community of

York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 251-252.

promise. He emphasizes the idea that God is revealed in the event of promise.⁷ He also emphasizes that the origin of Christian hope is in God's promises.

A community of promise must also be a community of mission. The Church is the community called to proclaim God's promise and to embody it in acts of faith. This is the community called to continue the work of Christ, which itself embodied the promise and pointed toward the future.

All of this description of the historical nature of the Church forces us to recognize that the life of this community is indeed historical. It has a past, present, and future. Its life is conditioned by its historicity. Its nature is not static, but it grows out of its past and present and future as they come together. The traditioning community is one which has form. We can describe its nature, but only if we recognize that it always stands in relation to past, present, and future. It always bears the potential for both continuity and change.

FUNCTIONS OF HISTORICAL TRADITION AND CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

If the Church is historical, then what are the functions of past, present, and future in that community? In

⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 30, 89.

this section we will examine particularly the functions of historical tradition and contemporary experience in the community since these have been the dual emphases through much of recent history. We have already noted that this polarity is inadequate because it does not take account of the breadth of meaning in the concepts of either tradition or experience. Neither does it take account of the future. What it does do is frame a very lively and real theological argument.

When we ask the function of historical tradition and contemporary experience in the community, we are really asking a question of theological method. How do we go about doing theology? We have already noted in Chapter 1 that the prophets appealed to both historical tradition and their contemporary experience of God and the world as they did their theological searching and reflection. In this way each came to a unique message for a particular time and place. Likewise did Jesus. Jesus' teaching was filled with references to both Jewish tradition and his own immediate experience of God and the world.

Despite this fact that both historical tradition and contemporary experience have functioned in the Jewish-Christian communities, the two have often been polarized as authorities for theological reflection. In twentieth century theology the pendulum has swung between them with

particular vigor. We will examine here how these two have functioned in various twentieth century approaches. We will examine first the nature of the community's theological task and, then, the source of authority (past, present, or future) from which that community has drawn.

The Theologizing Community

The theologizing community is the setting where historical tradition and contemporary experience coexist and exercise their influence. What do we mean by the theologizing community? Theology is simply the studied expression of faith. John Macquarrie's definition is an elaboration of this simple one, and it informs our work here:

Theology may be defined as the study which, through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith, seeks to express the content of this faith in the clearest and most coherent language available.⁸

This suggests that the Christian community is necessarily engaged in theologizing, or doing theology, if it is to function as a community of faith. Theologizing is not abstracted from the life of that community. It involves both participation in and reflection on that community's faith--what Maurice Wiles calls a "combination of faith

⁸ John Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977), p. 1.

and critical detachment."⁹ It has elements of both subjectivity and objectivity.

Theology, then, is a study from within faith. This is true for both the academic theologian and the theologizing persons in the parish. John Cobb recognizes this faith orientation of the theologian: "The Christian theologian is one who believes the Christ event is the source of the deepest insight into the nature of reality."¹⁰ This study of faith from within faith raises the question of subjectivity. Maurice Wiles recognizes this as a necessary aspect of theology:

If there were no religious faith, there would be no theology. It would therefore be absurd to suggest that there is not or should not be a close connexion between faith and theology. Moreover it is grossly misleading to suggest that an attitude of no faith represents a desirable position of neutrality. . . . someone who is thoroughly uninterested in political affairs is unlikely to make a good political scientist. But nor on the other hand is the most passionately committed party politician.¹¹

⁹Maurice Wiles, What Is Theology? (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 9.

¹⁰John B. Cobb, Jr., Professor of Theology, in a class lecture at the School of Theology at Claremont, September 1975. Permission to quote secured. Kaufman also recognizes that theology is done from inside faith. He distinguishes between theology and the scientific study of religion which is done from outside faith; Gordon Kaufman, God the Problem (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 17-37. Similarly, Macquarrie distinguishes between theology and the philosophy of religion, the latter of which demands more detachment (Macquarrie, Principles, p. 2).

¹¹Wiles, p. 7.

Herein lies the dilemma. What is the appropriate degree of subjectivity? After all, the theological task of the faith community is hopefully tied to deep dedication and commitment on the part of the people.

Theology also requires reflection on faith which involves some stepping back or objectivity--a seeking after clarity and coherence, and an application of reason to faith. Wiles insists that this does not mean the theologian should have less faith, but that the theologian's faith should be accompanied by a "capacity for detachment."¹² This idea suggests that the subjectivity and objectivity of the theological task are not mutually exclusive, but that the two can complement each other.

This does not mean that the subjectivity and objectivity will not stand in tension. What it does mean is that the tension can be fruitful, leading to a deepening and transforming of faith. This, in itself, may be threatening for it suggests that faith cannot be pinned down to a certain set of unchanging beliefs or assumptions. John Macquarrie recognizes this as he reflects on the double nature of theology:

Theology is therefore at once the self-expression and the self-criticism of the community's beliefs. It follows that theology is not a static science. There is development of doctrine as beliefs and their implications come to be better understood or as older

¹²Ibid., p. 9.

formulations are revised in light of new knowledge and criticism. The task of theology is never finished and there cannot be any final theology.¹³

To recognize this dynamic nature of theology is to recognize that the traditioning community does not have a theology so much as it does theologizing. That community is continually forming and reforming its faith expressions in light of its past, present, and future.

All of this leads to the conclusion that all Christians are theologians because we all stand within faith. All of us have certain faith assumptions that need to be clarified, broadened, deepened, or transformed. This does not mean that we do not need academic theologians or specialists. It does mean, however, that the Church has a role in helping all of its people in their theologizing--in their living of faith and in their reflections on their faith. Faith here is understood as an active way of being which includes all dimensions of personhood--believing, feeling, willing, and doing.¹⁴ The study of faith, then,

¹³Macquarrie, Principles, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴Jim Fowler, in religious education, has particularly expounded this point of view. He describes faith as a verb rather than a noun. He defines it as "an active 'mode of being in relation' to another or others in which we invest commitment, belief, love, risk and hope"; Jim Fowler and Sam Keen, Life Maps (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1978), p. 18. This point of view is quite compatible with the active view of faith in Macquarrie. Macquarrie talks about faith in terms of commitment, ultimate concern,

will involve the study of beliefs, attitudes, commitments, and practices. No one dimension can be singled out to the exclusion of the others.

Sources of Authority

How does the community proceed with its theological reflection? What are its sources of authority? We are concerned here with the life and practice of the church, and we can quickly see that a tension has existed in the church between applied and empirical methods of doing theology. The former is often based on historical tradition and draws its authority from there. The latter is based primarily on present experience and draws its authority from there. Variations exist within each of these two approaches, of course, and variations exist that combine elements of both.¹⁵ The dichotomy is here oversimplified

belief and response (see pp. 28-29). Likewise, Tillich's equation of faith with "ultimate concern" and Pannenberg's equation of faith with "trust" are dynamic views that incorporate all dimensions of human response to life. See Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), pp. 1-20; and Wolfhart Pannenberg, The Apostle's Creed (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 3-7.

¹⁵ Furthermore, this dichotomy represents only one set of methodological issues in theology, and even this issue has more dimensions than will be dealt with here. An example of another, related methodological issue is the way in which theological method is influenced by philosophy. This issue is treated extensively in: John B. Cobb, Jr., Living Options in Protestant Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962). Cobb's highlighting of this issue leads into some differences in groupings and emphases.

but the issue is a real one. The dichotomy is presented here to call attention to the tension that often exists between historical tradition and contemporary experience as authoritative in the various approaches to theology. The particular focus will be on twentieth century approaches.

Applied Theology

Applied theology attempts to articulate some basic Christian beliefs or ideas and to apply these to present experience. When these basic beliefs and ideas are drawn from the historical tradition, as they often are, the sources of authority are taken to be primarily historical. This can take many forms. The historical doctrines of the church can be taken as norms for theological reflection, or the Biblical witness can be taken as normative. In either case the community takes some aspect of the historical tradition as its starting point or source of authority.

Applied theology is sometimes called normative in that the norms are sought in the historical tradition to guide the community in its present life. The word "norm" can imply anything from an absolute rule to a standard or model. Thus, applied theology may refer to the application of rigid rules and principles from the past or, simply, to the search for general guiding norms in the interpretation of Scripture or Church tradition. Whichever be the case, applied theology often stresses the importance of seeking

answers and guidance for the Church's life in historical tradition. For Karl Barth and Emil Bruner this means that the life of the Church must seek and proclaim the Word of God as revealed in Scripture. The Scripture, mediated by the Holy Spirit, provides the guiding norm.¹⁶ For some Roman Catholic theologians this means that the life of the Church must be guided by the historical doctrines of the Church.¹⁷ In the ongoing life of the churches

¹⁶See particularly: Karl Barth, The Doctrine of Reconciliation of the Word of God (Edinburgh: Clark, 1936), pp. 98-140, 284-315; Emil Bruner, The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), pp. 43-59. Both Barth and Bruner favored a critical approach to Scripture and one which acknowledges the relation of the Scriptural witness to the historical church tradition and God's ongoing revelation through the Holy Spirit. The weight of their work, however, is to emphasize the normative nature of God's revelation in Christ as witnessed to in Scripture.

¹⁷The significance of doctrine as a guide is particularly reflected in the decrees of Vatican I and the theologizing which followed. Here the emphasis was on the permanence of the meaning in the Church's dogmas, suggesting their timeless relevance for the life of the Christian community. For an exposition of this idea of permanence of dogma, see: Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1972), pp. 302f.

The importance of doctrine for the practice of the church was emphasized in a new way by Jüngmann, Hofinger, and others in the kerygmatic renewal. They reacted against teaching doctrine in all of its complexity, but maintained an essentially doctrinal approach. Hofinger sought the kerygma, or the central Christian message, in the Bible and Church doctrine, as the guide for Christian life and the focus of Christian religious

conflicts arise over which of these shall be taken as normative, or how they can be held together.

The distinction between these two historical emphases (Scripture and the church's tradition) has been a major issue in the history of the Church at points, but John Macquarrie has recognized how inextricable they are from each other.¹⁸ The Biblical witness grows out of earlier traditions and the Church's traditions grow out of the Biblical witness. To think that one can be authoritative independent of the other is to fail to recognize the sense in which the Biblical witness is a written expression of the traditional beliefs and practices of the Jewish-Christian communities and the sense in which the post-New Testament history of the Church involved the continuing interpretation and reinterpretation of Scripture.

The applied approach to theology has the advantage of offering a clear referent for practical questions, as

education. He was not separating doctrine from the Bible, but he did find in the church's doctrine the basic elements of the Christian message to be passed on in catechetics. See particularly: Johannes Hofinger, Our Message Is Christ (Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1974); and Johannes Hofinger, The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1957).

¹⁸Macquarrie, Principles, pp. 11-12.

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¹⁸Macquarrie, Principles, pp. 11-12.

well as guidelines for action which guard against pure relativism. Further, it offers a community of ideas and persons against which a person can test his/her interpretations and decisions. This makes continuity possible between past and present, and guards against faddism.

On the other side, however, applied theology which appeals wholly or principally to historical tradition runs the risk of rigidity and irrelevance to the contemporary situation. Also, the question arises as to whether persons can actually draw solely from the past without having their perceptions colored by their present context. Gordon Kaufman points to some of the logical inconsistencies in Barth's approach to doing theology. Barth's push for an independent theological method is an attempt to extricate the theological norms from their cultural distortions. Kaufman points out that this is not possible. Further, there is a problem of defining just what God's final and authoritative revelation is.¹⁹

The Christian education models emerging out of an applied theology are deductive. An example would be the catechetical model of teaching certain beliefs or teaching the content of Scripture or historical Christian tradition, with the purpose of leading students to assent to correct

¹⁹Kaufman, pp. 20-24.

belief. The content of education arising from applied theology would likely stress historical or Biblical sources. The contents would likely be such settings as classrooms, worship services, lecture series, and didactic Bible studies.

Empirical Theology

The empirical approach in theology is one in which persons begin with present experience as the theological data and try to express the meaning of that in their beliefs and actions. The empirical theologian is most basically concerned with discerning the truth in the human situation. Underlying this effort is the assumption that there is theological meaning revealed in life experiences, including the experiences within the Church.

Important to the empirical mode of doing theology is the assumption that truth indeed can be discerned in the human situation. Friedrich Schleiermacher has been both lauded and criticized for his idea that theological reflection begins with a feeling of absolute dependence and that theology is an attempt to understand and articulate this feeling. Schleiermacher believed that the very experience of absolute dependence points to God.²⁰ This conclusion

²⁰ Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), I, 16-18.

was possible for Schleiermacher because he believed all reality is one so that a person's own deepest experience is related to all reality. This idea is expressed as "the doctrine of the union of the Divine Essence with human nature, both in the personality of Christ and in the common Spirit of the Church."²¹ This means that Christian faith experience is united with the Divine in such a way that the study of human experience tells us something about the divine.²²

Also included in the empirical mode of doing theology is a dialogue with the human sciences which takes account of and interprets the findings there. Don Browning suggests a relationship between theology and the human sciences which is dialogic. His analogical (or perspectival) approach to pastoral theology involves theology in dialogue with perspectives in the world other than its own.²³ Likewise, Kaufman comes to what he calls a

²¹Ibid., II, 738; see also, 385f and 569f.

²²This does not mean for Schleiermacher that the Word revealed in Jesus Christ should be ignored in theological reflection. It simply means that human experience, or the religious affections, provides an adequate starting point for this reflection. (See particularly *ibid.*, I, 76-78, 127-128, 131-141.) This is possible because all existence is a reflection of God. All of creation reflects the Word (*Ibid.*, I, 149-156)

²³Don S. Browning, "Analogy, Symbol, and Pastoral Theology in Tillich's Thought," Pastoral Psychology, XIX,

perspectival approach, which suggests that theology is one perspective for observing and interpreting the human condition.²⁴ This approach to theological interpretation takes account of both contemporary experience and the light that human sciences shed on that experience. It attempts, then, to give theological interpretation to those facts, and to give them a deeper meaning than mere description can do. Both Kaufman and Browning are doing theology empirically in the sense of drawing truth from life experience, and utilizing insights from the human Sciences.

The strengths of doing theology empirically are that the motivation for doing theology comes from human experience in the first place,²⁵ and that the relevance of theology to the human situation is encouraged when theological formulations are derived from the human situation. Daniel Day Williams and Anton Boisen particularly stress the relating of theological concepts to human experience.²⁶

181 (February 1968), 41-54.

²⁴Kaufman, pp. 25f.

²⁵Schubert Ogden, "What Is Theology?" Journal of Religion, LII (1972), 22-40.

²⁶See particularly: Daniel Day Williams, The Minister and the Care of Souls (New York: Harper & Row, 1961); Anton Boisen, The Exploration of the Inner World (New York: Harper & Bros., 1936)

Liberation theologians are today emphasizing the human situation both as data and as a motivating factor for our theologizing.

The empirical approach also offers an important corrective to applied theology, which does not always acknowledge its influence by preconceived notions. An empirical approach to theology offers a means for making explicit the influence of the human situation and our own cultural context on our theological formulations. Allen Moore suggests that theology cannot be separated from the cultural context anyway,²⁷ and similarly, Don Browning points to the inevitable contribution that culture makes to the moral context of a pastoral counselor.²⁸ Given the inextricability of theology from culture, the empirical approach to theology at least makes possible the "above-board" examination of that relationship.

Finally, the empirical approach to theology acknowledges the dynamic character of theology. Theology is not simply an application of the past onto the present, but it involves "history-making" in Ross Snyder's sense.²⁹ An

²⁷ Allen Moore, "The Place of Scientific Models and Theological Reflection in the Practice of Ministry," Pastoral Psychology, XXII, 210 (January 1971), 25-34.

²⁸ Don Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).

²⁹ Snyder has spoken of this idea in many of his

understanding of ministry is not, then, a restatement of the past, but a dynamic living in the present.

The vulnerabilities of an empirical approach to theology are the tendencies toward extreme relativism, fadism, and psychologizing. These vulnerabilities probably stem from the tendency of empirical theology to ignore or minimize the historical tradition. One cannot really say that empirical theologians ignore the historical tradition any more than one can say that the applied theologians ignore contemporary experience. The difference in emphasis is, however, a real difference.

The Christian education models growing out of empirical theology are inductive, in that they attempt to draw meaning from the present situation. The planning process, for example, would begin with observing the situation, and it would proceed to analyzing, interpreting, and creating educational models that would respond to that situation. The models would likely include input on many subjects including social issues and the human sciences. They would likely stress communication which would lead to what Snyder calls "midwifing meaning,"³⁰

writings and lectures, but he develops the idea particularly in Ross Snyder, "Educating a People of God" (Chicago: Chicago Theological Seminary, 1962) (Mimeographed)

³⁰Ross Snyder, "A Ministry of Meanings" (Nashville:

or to "situational theologizing."³¹ They would likely involve "experiential" exercises in which people would be encouraged to do introspection and to share their own thoughts and feelings with others. They would likely encourage involvement and action in a wide variety of situations with people from many different perspectives. Finally, these models would likely involve experiences of doing, evaluating, and conceptualizing back on the experiences.

Issues of Theological Method

Having reviewed two predominant approaches to theology, we can now see that the strict dichotomy between applied and empirical theology is clearly false. The applied, or normative, approach to theology inevitably takes account of life experience, and the empirical approach inevitably takes account of historical understanding, at least in the sense of carrying some preconceived notions into its empirical observations. No theologian can conceivably limit his or her sources of authority to

Youth Department, Division of the Local Church, General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, 1961)
(Mimeographed)

³¹Ross Snyder, "The Authentic Life: Its Theory and Practice" (Nashville: Older Youth-Young Adult Project, General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, 1963) (Mimeographed)

one.³² An empirical approach can never be untinged by the historical context nor can a normative approach be unaffected by the contemporary context. The real question becomes: "To what extent will I use empirical or applied methods in my theological reflections?"

The second methodological issue of concern here is how will theology relate to the past, present, and future in a meaningful synthesis? The applied mode tends to focus largely on the past for its theological formulations and the empirical mode tends to focus largely on the present. How can we bring these into dynamic interaction in our theologizing?

These issues are questions which call for new models of integration in the theological reflections of the Christian community--models which can bring together normative and empirical methodology, and models which can

³²Cobb has made this point with particular clarity: "Most serious thinkers are concerned about the relations of a variety of authorities rather than simply the selection of one. A position would not be Christian at all if it did not accept some authority of at least some aspect of the Bible. At the same time it would not be theological at all if it consisted entirely of Biblical texts unselectively assembled. Any serious statement of Christian theology must have some concern for the present cultural-intellectual-spiritual situation of man [sic] as well as some concern for the Bible" (Cobb, Living Options, p. 11).

relate theological understandings from the past, present, and future. This need for models of integration is one of the most pressing needs if we are to rebuild the foundation of education in the traditioning community.

CONCLUSIONS FOR AN EDUCATIONAL MODEL:
THE TRADITIONING COMMUNITY

If the Christian Church is to be both a preserving community and an agent of change, it must seek a theological method informed by both empirical and applied methodology, and it must seek a model for integrating past, present, and future in its theological reflections. In recent years some very significant attempts have been made to theologize in light of the entire historical process, drawing together the witness of the historical tradition, of contemporary experience, and of future hope. These efforts have been enriched by new emphases that have emerged in theology, calling fresh attention to the historicity of the Christian community. The Latin American liberation theologians and the theologians of hope have both emphasized the future as formative of the Christian faith community. Several liberation and feminist theologians have called particular attention to the significance of present experience in the life of the community and both the way that experience influences our world view and the richness of meaning in that experience. Finally, we in Christian religious education

are freshly reminded by those interested in religious socialization of the formative power of the community's past on its present. All of these, taken together, force us to recognize the richness of our living tradition and urge us to work at creating models for theologizing which take all parts of that tradition seriously, including that which is yet to be.

But how are people to get in touch with all those dimensions of tradition and to participate actively in it? What is being proposed here is an understanding of the church as an interpreting and transforming community. These represent the two dominant functions of that community as it engages in traditioning. Both functions require the integration of past, present, and future. Interpretation is centered on proclaiming and reflecting, and transformation on acting in the Church and in the world.

The Interpreting Community

The interpreting community is one which seeks to understand. It does this by proclaiming and reflecting on the meaning of the community's witness of faith (past, present, and future) in light of the richest possible understanding of its own experience and that of the world. In its reflections, the community uses all available tools of analysis--historical, social, psychological, anthropological, political, and so forth.

Much attention has recently been given to interpretation through the study of the discipline of hermeneutics. "Hermeneutics" is usually translated as interpretation, and the words interpretation and hermeneutics will be used interchangeably here. Hermeneutics has rich connotations. It is often understood as translation or explanation. The Greek verb hermeneuein can also be translated as "to proclaim" or "to speak." Hermeneutics, then, has to do with both proclaiming and explaining. This double character relates it naturally to a traditioning community and to the education in that community. Education must necessarily be concerned with the community's expression and explaining of its faith.

As a discipline hermeneutics has been understood as the study of the principles of interpretation. It has traditionally included the three acts of discerning the meaning of the text in its original context (the meaning for its author and intended hearers), discerning the meaning of the text for the contemporary context, and moving according to certain principles or rules from the former to the latter.³³ James Sanders defines these three aspects of hermeneutics in this way:

(1) the principles, rules, and techniques whereby the interpreter of a text attempts to understand it in

³³Paul J. Achtemeier, An Introduction to the New Hermeneutic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 13-14.

its original context; (2) the science of discerning how a thought or event in one cultural context may be understood in a different cultural context; and (3) the art of making the transfer.³⁴

The discipline of Hermeneutics, then, engages the text, the context, and the hermeneutical methods involved in moving from one to the other. This said, the unique problems in describing the hermeneutical dimensions of Christian religious education are problems of definition--the problems of defining just what are the texts, the contexts, and the hermeneutical methods.

The Texts

The texts of hermeneutics have commonly been regarded as the Biblical texts. In fact the definition of hermeneutics in Webster's Third New International Dictionary betrays this common understanding: "the study of the methodological principles of interpretation and explanation; specif: the study of the general principles of Biblical interpretation." Many who speak of hermeneutics in relation to Christian religious education are primarily speaking of Biblical interpretation.³⁵

³⁴James Sanders, "Hermeneutics," in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), p. 402.

³⁵See particularly: C. Ellis Nelson, Where Faith Begins (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967); and Edward Everding, "A Hermeneutical Approach to Educational Theory," in Marvin J. Taylor (ed.) Foundations for Christian

The question of texts has been opened up in recent years,³⁶ and we find many of the same questions of authority being raised as are raised in the tension between normative and empirical methods of theology. Should the texts be drawn from the past or present or from the promises or expectations for the future? The traditioning model of education emerging here is one in which the texts are taken to be inclusive of the Biblical, historical, and contemporary witnesses of faith.

Education in an Era of Change (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), pp. 41-53.

³⁶Braaten has recognized the tendency for the scope of hermeneutics to be enlarged to include history and historical documents; Carl Braaten, History and Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 131. Palmer notes that the word hermeneutics has come to refer to the interpretation of a broad variety of texts, particularly literary texts, but also including human art, action, dreams, and symbols. See particularly his review of six modern definitions of hermeneutics in: Richard Palmer, Hermeneutics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), pp. 33-45.

A new trend is emerging in which the present action of the Christian community and the action upon that community are interpreted as texts. Pastoral theologians have often referred to their pastoral experiences with persons as texts to be interpreted. Caldwell argues for an interpretation of both the case and the tradition and he sees the word of God at the interface; Charles Caldwell, Pastoral Theological Hermeneutics (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1978), p. 129. Similar to Caldwell's pastoral theological hermeneutics is Thomas Groome's present dialectical hermeneutics which is influenced by the liberation theologians' understanding of praxis. Groome, like Caldwell, is concerned with the interpretation of both the present experience of the Christian community and the texts of tradition. He, however, describes the contemporary texts not so much in terms of pastoral cases as in terms of the actions of the Christian community and the actions of the culture on that

The Contexts

This question of the context of hermeneutics is one that has received relatively little attention until recent years. More attention has been given to the historical texts, including how to approach them and how to make the transfer from text to context. This introduces a problem because one cannot take for granted that the context is easily discerned and understood. The tendency for persons to approach texts through a cultural preunderstanding, or conceptual framework, is being called freshly to attention by liberation and feminist theologians. Through these persons Biblical hermeneutics is moving in a new direction, taking more seriously the need to analyze the presuppositions one brings from the present context to the task of Biblical-historical research. The contemporary context, then, becomes important not only as the setting to which the historical texts speak, but also as a guide for approaching and interpreting the texts (the methods, presuppositions, etc.). The contexts are brought into dialogue with the texts, and the texts and contexts are interpreted

community. He also places a stress on the proclamation and interpretation of future hope, so that he attempts to bring together past, present, and future as texts to be interpreted and related to one another. See particularly: Thomas N. Groome, "A Task of Present Dialectical Hermeneutics," Living Light, XIV, 3 (Fall 1977), 416-421.

in light of each other.

The traditioning model of religious education proposed here is one in which this kind of dialogue is held to be essential. The educational task is to facilitate that dialogue for persons who stand at a particular time and place interacting with many texts and contexts.

The Method

The question of hermeneutical method is of particular concern here because it has direct bearing on the continuity/change question. James Sanders recognizes that "[h]ermeneutics is the mid-point between the Bible's stability and adaptability as canon."³⁷ Whatever the hermeneutical method the question of stability and adaptability is raised, for the questions of the message arising from the text and its relationship to the present situation are inevitable. Sanders proposes to address this question through canonical hermeneutics:

The task of biblical hermeneutics today is to seek a mid-point between the hermeneutical task of the historical-critical method, which seeks original biblical meanings, and the hermeneutical task of spanning

³⁷ Sanders, "Hermeneutics," p. 404; see also James Sanders, "Hermeneutics in True and False Prophecy," in George W. Coats and Burke O. Long (eds.) Canon and Authority (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 21-41; James Sanders, "Adaptable for Life: the Nature and Function of Canon," in F. M. Cross, W. E. Lemke, and P. D. Miller (eds.) Magnalia Dei (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 531-560.

the gap between those recovered meanings and modern cultural systems of meaning. And that task is called canonical hermeneutics: the means whereby Israel, Judaism, and the church spanned the gaps between inherited faith and new cultural settings.³⁸

For Sanders the history of the canon itself offers a paradigm for the hermeneutical task. The process by which the canon emerged was one in which the earlier traditions and newer contexts were brought together and in which the tradition itself was formed and re-formed. This is not unlike the proposal here that hermeneutics is a dialogic process out of which emerges fresh insight.

In both the demythologizing methods of Bultmann and the historical-critical methods of Emilio Betti and E. D. Hirsch, the adaptability of the text is understood to be more in its applicability or message to the contemporary situation. The original meaning is thought to be not only attainable in some sense, but also unchangeable and universally applicable. For Sanders in his canonical hermeneutics, Hans Gadamer in his dialectical approach to hermeneutics, and Wolfhart Pannenberg in his theology of world history, the understanding of the historical texts themselves is thought to change through history and through interaction with the different cultural contexts. Thus, the task of hermeneutics is to probe the manner by which the

³⁸ Sanders, "Hermeneutics," p. 403.

tradition has been formed and reformed. In these approaches the historical texts from every period are continually brought into dialogue with the contemporary witnesses of faith and the contemporary cultural context.

If a traditioning model of education has a hermeneutical dimension, then education needs to be dialogic--moving back and forth through the history of tradition and the personal and cultural dynamics of the present. This assumes that the earliest historical texts are not the only authoritative ones. This assumes that revelation continues through history and that the community's understanding at a given time is a synthesis of all the past and present and the future forces on the community.

The Transforming Community

The traditioning community not only seeks to understand, but it also seeks to act in the Church and in the world. It seeks to act in the direction of the Kingdom of God, transforming and being transformed.³⁹ This idea is stressed particularly by the theologians of hope, who point boldly to God's future, and by the liberation

³⁹The idea of acting in the direction of the Kingdom of God is emphasized by Moltmann. He understands God's covenant with humanity as calling human persons to move in the direction of God's promise (Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 100-121)

theologians, who point despairingly to the discrepancies between contemporary human existence and the ideal of the Kingdom of God. The transforming community is one in which individual lives, communities, societal structures, and indeed, all of creation, are transformed as all of us participate actively in the living tradition.

But what does this participation mean? We have said above that the traditioning community is one which relates to God. The nature of this relationship is covenantal. It is a relationship of promise in which both God and God's people participate. It is a relationship which takes place in the midst of history.⁴⁰ And in this covenantal relationship are the seeds of transformation.

God's Promise

We have said above that the Church is a community

⁴⁰For Jose Miguez Bonino and Gustavo Gutiérrez this means that God is actually present in history, transforming the world, and that human persons are called to participate in that work for transformation. See particularly: Jose Miguez Bonino, Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 89, 150, 108-109; and Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 189-208. For Moltmann, God is understood as future, but God revealed in the event of promise and in relation to the human experience of the world at a given time (p. 89; see also pp. 95-138). This event of promise does not separate people from the world, but involves them in hope, mission, and self-emptying (pp. 91-92).

of promise living toward the future. This has been an historical emphasis in the understanding of the Church and is finding revitalization under the present influences of Gustavo Gutiérrez, Jürgen Moltmann, and others. Both Gutiérrez and Moltmann understand God to be revealed through promise and the future to be the orienting focus of history.⁴¹

Moltmann calls attention to this futuristic orientation in the Biblical message. God's appearance to Israel is never an end in itself, but always points away from a particular time and place and toward the future. In fact, Yahweh's appearance creates dissatisfaction with the present and movement toward future.

[T]he hearers of the promise become incongruous with the reality around them as they strike out in hope towards the promised new future. The result is not the religious sanctioning of the present, but a breaking away from the present towards the future.⁴²

The future is always before the people, and still in the New Testament message is a radical pointing forward. The gospel does not simply fulfill the Old Testament history of promises, but itself points beyond to a new future: "In the gospel the Old Testament history of promise finds more than a fulfillment which does away with it; it finds its

⁴¹Gutiérrez, p. 160; Moltmann, pp. 92-94, 102-112.

⁴²Moltmann, p. 100.

future."⁴³ Moltmann emphasizes the eschatological nature of Jesus' ministry and of the early Christian community. He thinks that the significance of this was not even understood by Schweitzer, Weiss, and Barth, who made so much of it. He suggests that the real significance of eschatology lies in the idea that hope springs from God's promise.⁴⁴ The Christian community, then, is a community of promise living toward God's future.

God's promise is real and related to the world but it is not without mystery. Gutiérrez points out that the liberation movement in Latin America holds forth a vision of the emancipation of persons and a "qualitatively different society."⁴⁵ At the same time he repeatedly points out the dialectical relationship between what he calls the "Promise" and the "promises." God's promises are, indeed, fulfilled in history, but cannot be completely identified with any particular social reality.⁴⁶

God's promise in the fullest sense is the Kingdom of God, with all the wealth of meaning and ambiguity that

⁴³ Ibid., p. 147.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 37-41. Moltmann puts this idea over against an idea of logos as "the epiphany of the eternal present of being" (pp. 40-41).

⁴⁵ Gutiérrez, p. 91.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 161, 168, 177, 226-232, 238.

that term implies. God's promise carries with it a lure for us to move in the direction of that Kingdom and an assurance of God's continuing presence with us.

The Church's Mission

If the Church represents God's people (ekklesia and laos), then the Church must respond to and participate in God's promise. We must respond with hope and commitment. God's promise stands as the motivating force of our work, and also, as the judge of our efforts.⁴⁷ Our work will always seem partial and inadequate in light of the whole of God's promise.

The actual role of human persons in bringing in the Kingdom is a hotly debated issue. The position put forth here is that God's Kingdom is a gift of God, but that human efforts do make a difference. God can work through human persons, though human efforts will always be fallible and can never be equated with God's. The position is similar to that of Thomas Groome.

Thus while we can never claim to build the Kingdom by our own human efforts, yet those same efforts on behalf of human dignity, justice, freedom, and the like will by the grace of God. But the grace comes to us in our present to enable us to live lives that make the Kingdom present even now. By such lives we help prepare the "material" for its final realization.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 238.

God is working out the Kingdom within our history,
but not without⁴⁸ the human activity that constitutes
this history.

What is the mission of the community then? Perhaps the mission of the Church is doomed to be as elusive as the definition of the Church. At least we can say at this point that the mission has to do with living in those images and models of the Church discussed above. It has to do with being the people of God called out--the people who are engaged in sharing (koinonia), serving (diakonia), proclaiming (kerygma), and worshipping (leitourgia). Mission is not exactly the same in every age. It surely has to do with being deeply involved in people's suffering and being engaged in actions which bear fruits of love and justice. Definite, unchanging formulae for "What should we do?" elude us. We participate instead in the living stream of tradition which is the Church. That involves some ambiguity and risk, and it demands full commitment.

If a traditioning model of education has a transformative dimension, then education needs to help people to look forward and hope in God's promise. We need to proclaim those promises and encourage people to inquire and

⁴⁸Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 45. Groome sees his position in line with that of the Second Vatican Council as stated in Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Art. 38 and 39). He particularly refers to the ideas in that document that human efforts will bear fruits and prepare the "material" for the Kingdom.

reflect on their meaning. We need, also, to enable persons to do visioning and planning and acting. Further, education needs to be deeply personal, encouraging teachers and students to relate in significant ways, to be open to God's spirit, and to be deeply involved in the persons and issues around them. In sum, we need to help people hear God's promises, participate actively in visioning, and be deeply involved with each other and God and the world.

SUMMARY OF ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE TRADITIONING COMMUNITY

The traditioning community is the context in which Christian religious education takes place. Our understanding of it is, therefore, foundational to our model of education. Below are four assumptions about that community that summarize the presentation in this chapter. These assumptions form foundations of the traditioning model proposed in Part III. We are assuming:

1. That the images and models of the Church are rich--reflecting the many dimensions of the Church and the mystery that is inherent in it.
2. That the nature of the Church is historical. It is deeply influenced by its past, present, and future, and it cannot escape its temporality. As a historical community, it is related to God,

related to the world, the bearer of tradition, and living toward the future.

3. That the community has a theologizing task which requires the study of the historical tradition and contemporary experience and future hope. The polarity between applied and empirical methods of theology needs to be transcended so that the community can be encouraged to search for the meanings in the past, present, and future.
4. That the community's educational task is to involve persons in the living Christian tradition. This involves the interpretive tasks of proclaiming and reflecting on the meanings in the Christian witness. It also includes the transformative tasks of acting in the direction of God's Kingdom.

In Part III these assumptions about the Church will be implicit as formative factors in the educational model proposed there.

Chapter 4

THE PERSON IN PROCESS

The good old days were the days when persons seemed to change in a gradual process and when the challenge for educators was to encourage people in their changing. The problem in recent days seems different, for the human community seems to change in dramatic and unlimited ways.

The landscape of human values, institutions, beliefs, and practices will hardly stand still long enough for human scientists to describe them. Certainly some of these values, institutions, beliefs, and practices seem peculiarly resistant to change, and we marvel at their tenacity. At the same time we hear people struggling to adapt to the rapidly changing world--often struggling to find some unchanging core which they can grasp as the world around them flashes with new issues of global justice and resource depletion, new kinds of lifestyle options, new products to buy, and new products not to buy because they may be harmful to your health. Dwayne Huebner states,

The problem is no longer one of explaining change, but of explaining nonchange. Man [sic] is a transcendent being, i.e., he has the capacity to transcend what he is to become something that he is not.¹

¹Dwayne Huebner, "Curriculum as Concern for Man's Temporality," in William Pinar (ed.) Curriculum Theorizing

And so one foundational issue for the formulation of a model of Christian religious education is the question of the nature of persons. Are persons primarily static or changing? Are they individual or communal? Are they active or passive? These questions cannot really be separated from similar questions concerning the nature of reality, that is the nature of the world in which persons exist. The world is not simply a backdrop for the human drama, but is itself part of the drama of creation. Persons are part of this whole of creation, so we must ask: Is the world primarily static or changing, a collection of unrelated parts or a web of interrelated entities, active or passive?

The search for a model of education which maximizes the possibility for continuity and change calls us to grapple with these issues. The traditioning model which is emerging here is based on certain assumptions about the nature of persons which will be probed in this chapter.

QUESTIONS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE

In probing the possible views of human persons one can see quickly that the options can be polarized (and have

(Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975), p. 241.

been as easily as can be the phenomena of continuity and change. Three kinds of questions of human nature will be of particular concern here: the questions of process, relatedness, and freedom.

Are Persons Stable or Changing?

The answer to this question may be less simple and obvious than it seems. For many years psychologists and sociologists have focused on the static aspects of human nature--that is, the essential nature of human persons. The search has been for defining qualities such as personality, intelligence, patterns of group formation and maintenance, interaction styles, and patterns of learning. Even developmental psychologists, who have studied human change, have largely focused on the static states or stages on the developmental continuum. In an attempt to be global, psychologists and sociologists have tested their hypotheses in different cultures, but always with the idea of finding universals--the essential aspects of human nature which transcend cultural boundaries. The static and universal aspects of human nature have been the focus, with the changing aspects taking a secondary role.

In recent years some shift has been taking place away from this perspective, particularly as more attention is given to the dynamics of change. In developmental

psychology, for example, Erik Erikson took one large step in this direction by emphasizing the psychosocial aspects of human development. Erikson has focused far more than Freud on the actual process of development and the dynamic interaction of the internal psychological and external social factors in this process. Similarly, Jean Piaget has attended to the processes of assimilation and accommodation by which development proceeds.

Even more radical shifts are taking place, though, as psychological and sociological theories are taken to task for their biases toward the fixity of the world. Proponents of phenomenological sociology, for example, criticize contemporary sociology for its "view of the methodology as a set of techniques to be used to catch the unchanging properties of a 'solid' factual world."² In this desire to interpret the meaning of everyday experience the phenomenologists want to avoid imposing preset assumptions about a fixed world and fixed categories on our questions and our methods.

Similarly, Klaus Riegel has proposed a dialectical theory of development which "seeks to understand the changing individual in a changing social world."³ He is not

²Paul Filmer et al., New Directions in Sociological Theory (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), p. 2.

³Klaus F. Riegel, "Toward a Dialectical Theory of Development," Human Development, XVIII (1975), 50.

concerned with the stable characteristics of human persons or the fixed patterns of development. He is concerned, rather, with the dynamics of human change. He has proposed that development takes place through the interacting influences of events which are inner-biological, individual-psychological, cultural-sociological, and outer-physical.⁴ The developmental changes are never-ending, taking place as change in one dimension produces disharmony in another dimension. A contradiction is set up (e.g., between the biological maturation and the cultural expectations) and a crisis results. The resolution of this crisis yields a new synthesis, e.g., a new perspective or a new pattern of relating. Riegel recognizes that this approach to developmental psychology shifts the focus from the developmental levels of stability to the dynamics of change.

Unlike Piaget's theory of cognitive development, a dialectical theory of development does not emphasize the plateaus at which equilibrium or balance is achieved. Stable plateaus of balance are the exception, a temporary marking or achievement. As soon as a developmental task is completed and synchrony attained, new questions, doubts, and contradictions arise within the individual and within society.⁵

The question, then, in our era is wide open. Are

⁴Ibid., pp. 50-64. See also: Klaus F. Riegel, "The Dialectics of Human Development," American Psychologist, XXXI (1976), 689-700.

⁵Riegel, "Toward a Dialectical Theory," pp. 51-52; see also: Klaus F. Riegel, "From Traits and Equilibrium Toward Developmental Dialectics," in W. J. Arnold and J. K. Cole (eds) 1974-75 Nebraska Symposium on Motivation

persons static or stable in certain essential characteristics, or are they characterized more fundamentally by continuing change?

Are Persons Individual or Social?

A second kind of question about human nature is relatedness. To what extent are persons related to other persons and the world, and what is the nature of the relationship? Is it superficial or internal? The answers to these questions have often been polarized in recent years. The individualistic and communal points of view have been placed in opposition.

Donald Campbell raises questions with one form of this polarization in his presidential address to the American Psychological Association.⁶ He suggests that the psychologists' emphasis on human persons as individual, self-gratifying, biological organisms has led to a distrust of the social restraint imposed by moral traditions. The psychological view has tended to devalue the role of social institutions and traditions on persons' lives and

(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976); Klaus F. Riegel, Psychology of Development and History (New York: Plenum, 1976).

⁶Donald T. Campbell, "On the Conflicts between Biological and Social Evolution and between Psychology and Moral Tradition," American Psychologist, XXX (December 1975), 1103-1126, particularly pp. 1120-1122.

to place great value on the importance of self-gratification, pleasure, and so forth. This view emerges, in fact, in opposition to another point of view in which persons are thought to be linked to the society in such a way as to need the restraint that society's traditions offer. The former point of view places great trust in the basic goodness of the human organism, and the latter assumes a basic inadequacy or weakness in human nature that calls for social restraint. Campbell suggests that the psychological view he describes may, in fact, be demonstrated scientifically to be inadequate. Studies in population genetics and social system evolution may give credibility to the social and personal value of the so-called "repressive or inhibitory moral traditions."⁷

This conflict between a modern psychological and traditional moral perspective need not be discussed in the abstract. Real live people hold these opposing views in an endless variety of forms. In the extreme of the modern psychological point of view, persons resist all forms of social boundedness and seek self-gratification as an end in itself. Therefore, relationships, commitments, ideologies, social mores, and traditional rituals and restraints are understood to be secondary to this push toward self-

⁷Ibid., p. 1120.

gratification or some other individualistic goal.

Robert Lifton describes just such a reality when he describes "protean man [sic]."⁸ The "protean man" is the person who seeks to be relieved of social restraints in order to explore the new.

What has actually disappeared--in Sartre and in protean man in general--is the classic superego, the internalization of clearly defined criteria of right and wrong transmitted within a particular culture by parents to their children. Protean man requires freedom from precisely that kind of superego--he requires a symbolic fatherlessness--in order to carry out his explorations.⁹

The "protean man" is a new kind of person who is in a continual process of re-creation and who, in short, is continually seeking change over continuity. Lifton suggests that this new mode of self-process has arisen from historic shifts which have disrupted persons' relationship to their social institutions and symbols, thereby causing "historical (or psychohistorical) dislocation."¹⁰ At the same time persons have been exposed to a "flooding of imagery" so that they are bombarded by partial and superficial alternatives to the cultural institutions and symbols.¹¹ They are, in short, under the illusion that one can separate himself or herself from the restraints and obligations of culture and that this is a desirable state.

⁸ Robert Jay Lifton, "Protean Man," Partisan Review, XXXV, 1 (Winter 1968), 13-27.

⁹ Ibid., p. 19. ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 16. ¹¹ Ibid.

If the individualistic point of view is one end of the pole, then the communal point of view is the other end. In the extreme of the communal point of view, social institutions and values are thought to be the shapers of individual persons and the real source of human value. The behaviorists have particularly worked under the assumption that persons are formed by the environment of people and things and events outside of themselves, with little if any influence coming from within themselves. The consequent emphasis is not on individuality, but on the influence of society and the outer environment on the individual.

Are Persons Active or Passive?

The third question about human nature has to do with freedom, or with the role of persons in actively engaging the world or passively being formed by it. Again, this issue has been called to attention by the modern social sciences. The corresponding question is whether the environment in which persons live is active or passive. One's answers to these questions have a great deal to do with one's educational model, for it affects one's assumptions about the learners and the educational environment.

Klaus Riegel has analyzed four perspectives of

human development.¹² In the first, both the persons and the environment are seen to be passive, and development takes place only through association of stimuli. In the second, the persons are thought to be active and the environment passive, and development takes place as persons actively explore their environment. Piaget represents this point of view. In the third, the persons are thought to be passive and the environment active, as in Skinner's behavior modification. Finally, in the fourth point of view, both the persons and the environment are thought to be actively influencing each other. Riegel praises the Soviet psychologist S. L. Rubinstein for putting forth this alternative. In this point of view the interactive relationship between the individual and society is emphasized.

So the question of human freedom emerges in terms of how active people are in engaging the world or how passive they are in being molded by the world. We must also address the old "puppet on a string" question in relation to God. Are persons active or passive in relation to God?

TOWARD A PROCESS MODEL OF HUMAN NATURE

Here we will probe into a process model of human

¹²Klaus F. Riegel, "Developmental Psychology and Society: Some Historical and Ethical Considerations," in J. R. Nesselroade and H. W. Reese (eds.) Life Span Developmental Psychology (New York: Academic Press, 1973), pp. 20-23.

persons with the hope of suggesting new ways of thinking about human existence and about education. The hope is that we can transcend these polarized ways of thinking about human nature.

Imagine the person in process--moving into an intersection. This person is part of the flow of traffic moving in one direction. But in the intersection, the person is faced with traffic and pedestrians from all directions, with traffic signals, with a memory of traffic rules, with personal concerns that may be far away, with road conditions, and "who knows what else." The person can continue moving through in the same direction or can turn or stop or speed ahead. That person will be influenced, of course, by his or her own plans and may simply follow these. But the person will also be influenced by what is happening in the intersection. The plans may be changed or even forgotten. This is the person in process, living through a succession of intersections.

The three basic assumptions proposed here correspond with the three questions raised above:

1. Are persons stable or changing? The answer is "yes." They are somehow continuous with their past and somehow changing as they move into their future. The person at the intersection is faced

with the decision to continue according to plan or to change course. Both options are real, and either decision will be influenced by what has gone before, what is happening in the intersection, and what is anticipated about the future. Whether the person continues or changes course, the forces for continuity and the forces for change will have played their part in the drama.

2. Are persons individual or social? I am proposing that persons are internally related to God, to other persons, and to the world. God and the world enter deeply into our own individual goals and plans, and into the changes that are made in these along the way.
3. Finally, are persons active or passive? I am proposing that persons are both acting and acted upon by God and the world around them. We are not passive spectators at the intersection. We are acting and being acted upon all the way through.

This is the proposed model of human nature. These three assumptions will be examined and elaborated through the rest of this chapter.

These three assumptions actually spring from various soils. The first assumption about the processive nature

of reality is characteristic not only of the process philosophy of Whitehead and Hartshorne, but also of pragmatism. Eugene Fontinell recognizes the value of all these new philosophies in pushing toward a deeper understanding of process and in recognizing that "reality is processive through and through."¹³ In an attempt to reconcile the continuity and change of reality, philosophers have largely viewed process or change as a superficial or secondary phenomenon. Fontinell notes:

In both philosophy and religion the unchanging, the permanent, the eternal, the timeless have been the treasured goals. Change and time were to be overcome, or, at best, seen as pathways to a reality beyond. Whether referring to the cosmos, to man or to God, the grand assumption was that each was essentially complete. Whatever change was conceded to the first two (God, of course, was allowed no change at all) was relegated to the surface, was "accidental," as compared to the unchanging principles, laws and values which "essentially" constituted them.¹⁴

If, however, reality is viewed as processive through and through, then the challenge is to explain continuity and stability. The challenge is to understand the relationship between continuity and change.

The second assumption about the relatedness of God, human persons, and the world is picked up also by the pragmatists as well as by the Soviet psychologist discussed

¹³ Eugene Fontinell, "Pragmatism, Process, and Religious Education," Religious Education, LXVIII, 3 (May-June 1973), 324.

¹⁴ Ibid.

above, S. L. Rubinstein. Though Rubinstein does not deal with the relatedness with God, he goes far in emphasizing the relatedness of all reality by suggesting that human persons develop through complex interactions between the internal biochemical and the external sociocultural processes.¹⁵ These are not parallel processes, but interacting ones. Riegel adds an emphasis on the physical world to this complex of interactions. Persons develop in relation to the dynamic interactions between the internal and external dimensions of reality.

The last assumption is that God, human persons, and the world are all active in their relationships with each other. This idea is articulated in part by S. L. Rubinstein, as well as by Klaus Riegel in his dialectical developmental psychology. Both Rubinstein and Riegel see human persons and the environment in a dynamic interaction in which both are active participants. Neither of these men, however, takes account of the role of God in this complex of relationships.

¹⁵Riegel, "Developmental Psychology and Society," pp. 14-15, 22-23. Note: The mind-body problem is reformed in Rubinstein's perspective. Mind and body are not seen as two separate entities. The mutual influence of consciousness and behavior is so great that the line between the mental and the physical is not clearly discernible. Both are in relationship to both inner and outer dimensions of reality, and the real dualism is between the inner and outer rather than between the mind and body.

And so we have clues as to how we might break out of some customary patterns of thinking about human nature, but many questions are left unanswered. We will spring from these questions into the work of two persons who have particularly focused on the processive quality of reality. George Herbert Mead, in his social psychology, and Alfred North Whitehead, in his metaphysics, have both offered clues as to how the process takes place and how a model of education might stimulate both continuity and change.

GEORGE HERBERT MEAD--A SOCIAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL VIEW

We look first to George Herbert Mead. Mead was unique in defining the self in terms of a process rather than as a static entity. The concept of self was derived originally from the Anglo-Saxon word meaning "same" or "identical." The idea of self then suggests a particular identity which exists through time. Mead's uniqueness was his basic idea that social interactions produce a developing rather than a static, self.¹⁶ In this concept of self are clues as to how continuity and change can coexist without the one's destroying the other.

Mead understood his own work against the background

¹⁶Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, Sociology (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 100.

of the scientists and philosophers in the ancient world who sought reality in the essence of an object.¹⁷ Mead was attempting to describe the world as it was implied by the search for essences, for the scientific method "is a method not of knowing the unchangeable but of determining the form of the world within which we live as it changes from moment to moment."¹⁸ Mead was himself trying to re-create the study of human nature within the context of the new scientific world view of the early twentieth century.

Mead's Basic Understanding of Reality

For Mead the world is understood as continually passing, and the unit of existence is taken to be the event or the act.¹⁹ Change, however, implies identity as well, for without identity, change would not even be recognized as different.²⁰

Mead not only understands the world of reality as continually changing, but as being affected by human

¹⁷George H. Mead, "Scientific Method and Individual Thinker," in John Dewey et al. (eds.) Creative Intelligence (New York: Holt, 1917), p. 176.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁹George H. Mead, The Philosophy of the Act (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 64-65.

²⁰Ibid., p. 638.

intelligence and the application of the scientific method itself. This implies that the balance between continuity and change in the world can be influenced by human action. Mead suggests that the scientific method is "the evolutionary process grown self-conscious."²¹ Science offers a method of progress by offering a means for analyzing problems and testing suggested solutions. Mead sees this as a means for enabling change and maintaining structure and order.

Mead's theory is based on the idea that the present is the locus of reality.²² Mead refers to the present as an emergent event, in terms of which the past is written and the foundations for the future are laid. The emergent event is "more than the processes that have led up to it," but it is an event which is itself unique.²³

The past and future are important because they influence the present. They exert their influence through the thinking process.²⁴ Thinking, then, is crucial for continuity with the past and change into the future. By

²¹George Herbert Mead, The Social Psychology of George Herbert Mead (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 21.

²²George H. Mead, The Philosophy of the Present (Chicago: Open Court, 1932), pp. 1f.

²³Ibid., p. 23.

²⁴Ibid., p. 88.

concentrating our thoughts on the past and the future simultaneously, for example, our present action is informed by both.

The Development of the Self

Given this basic understanding of reality, Mead would naturally view the nature of the self as processive. The self actually derives from the social process, and, in turn, affects that process. Certain features of that interactive human development particularly shed light on the relationship between continuity and change.

Development Is the Internalization of Social Control

First, the development of the self is a process of taking other persons into oneself--of internalizing social control. Individuals develop as they begin to internalize society's expectations and attitudes toward them. Mead approaches human development and personality, then, from the standpoint of society.

For social psychology, the whole (society) is prior to the part (the individual), not the part to the whole; and the part is explained in terms of the whole, not the whole in terms of the part or parts.²⁵

²⁵George H. Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 73; cf. p. 49; and Mead, The Social Psychology, pp. 32, 217, 255f.

This viewpoint has come to characterize the symbolic interaction theory of socialization which has grown up from Mead's work.²⁶ Mead thinks that his understanding is akin to the behaviorist view, but he thinks that he adds to Watson the focus on the inner side of behavior or the part of the act that is not immediately revealed.²⁷ A social act, then, is a complex organic process, which involves both stimulus and response and the internal processes of thinking.

The internalization of social control takes place as a person learns to "take the role of the "other." This is a conversation which takes place within individuals as they take the roles and attitudes of others into their own thoughts. The person at the intersection recalls the warnings, attitudes, and advice that have been experienced in the past, and these enter into the inner conversation. This inner conversation is what Mead means by thought.²⁸

The process of taking the role of the other leads to a person's development of a social self (or an image of oneself from another's perspective). A person perceives,

²⁶Arnold M. Rose, "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory," in Human Behavior and Social Processes (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 13.

²⁷Mead, Mind, Self and Society, p. 6.

²⁸Mead, The Social Psychology, pp. 37-38.

for example, that others think of him or her as a good person, an underachiever, the bad one in the family, and so forth. Each of these images is called a "me." One will, of course, have more than one such "me." These may include the attitudes and expectations of me from Mother, Father, the local congregation, the fifth grade teacher, the high school group of friends, and so forth.

But we are not passively molded by these attitudes of other people. These various images of one's social self are coordinated by the "I" (or subjective self) which responds to the various "me's."²⁹ As we stand at the intersection we may be bombarded with images of ourselves as others see us (good girl, nice boy, naughty child, special friend, lazy worker), and we have to respond to these. All of the persons and groups of persons who touch our lives influence us, and we as individuals have to sift and sort through all of these influences and make choices for our lives.

The process of taking the role of the other is a complex interaction between the social images of oneself (me's) and one's subjective self (I). This is the way people develop, and the way they can take account of the various factors of past, present, and future.³⁰ This also

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 241f.

³⁰ Mead, Philosophy of the Present, p. xxv.

make possible the complex interactions in human society. Persons develop the ability to take the attitude not only of a particular "other" but also of the "generalized other" (like the church or the school) to themselves. As persons take the role of these others they internalize their views about God, church, sex, democracy, and so forth. These influences become part of the persons' experience from which they can draw. The persons (with their subjective "I" selves) are always engaged in selecting and interpreting.

Development Is Influenced by Symbols

The second feature to note in Mead's understanding of the self is that development is influenced by symbols created in social interaction. As pointed out above, thinking is a conversation with oneself, taking the attitude of the other and utilizing significant symbols.³¹ Human persons communicate significant symbols to one another through gestures, including speech, music, rituals, body movements, and so forth. Persons thus call out an attitude in others and in themselves when they exchange these symbols (such as a smile or a handshake).³²

A significant symbol is one which has a common meaning for everyone involved. The person at the intersection,

³¹Mead, The Social Psychology, pp. 32-33, 37-38.

³²Ibid., p. 34.

for example, recognizes the red light and knows what it signifies. Similarly, the following incident reflects the functioning of significant symbols:

Walking along a seashore in Wales I was struck by the power of significant symbols. I heard a group of people singing hymns, and I noticed that several people stopped to join in the singing. Others walked on past, but joined in the singing as well, carrying the tune on down the promenade. I lingered and listened, but when the singing ended and the sermon began people began to wander off. The sermon was an ordinary sidewalk type with the usual theme and the usual words and style. Its power as a significant symbol with this group (or as a positive symbol anyway) was far less great than that of the hymn which was familiar to so many of these folk and which apparently entered into their own inner conversations with significant communities in their own histories.

Through the dynamic exchange of significant symbols and the incorporation of these into thought, persons form opinions of their own.

The formation of opinion takes place through conversation of individuals with members of groups to which they belong or through that inner conversation of thought which is outer conversation imported into the mind.³³

This same basic process works in human institutions. The institutions of church, school, or family can be regarded as social habits or patterns, which are communicated

³³Mead, The Philosophy of the Act, p. 616.

through significant symbols (such as the liturgy of the church, the daily routines of the school, or the private jokes of the family). These symbols arouse certain responses in the individual participants.³⁴ The institutions, then, help form the thoughts and opinions of the individual persons.

In practical terms for Christian education, this would suggest that the symbols communicated through the gestures of the communion ritual call forth certain responses in the community of worshippers. The exchange of gestures in the ritual shapes the common life of the community. Likewise, the gestures in speech and writing on such subjects as marriage or political involvement call forth responses in the participants of the institution. The responses may be different for different participants, however--e.g., apathy, action, or rebellion. Self-consciousness comes about when one reflects on and analyzes why symbols call up different responses in others than in oneself.³⁵

The most significant point here is that the influence of the group has to do with its language and symbols.

³⁴Mead, The Social Psychology, p. 33.

³⁵This idea is developed in Douglas C. Kimmel, Adulthood and Aging (New York: Wiley, 1974), p. 51.

A group has more influence on the individual when they "speak the same language," that is, when the symbols are significant (or mutually understood) for both the group and the individual.³⁶ Mead recognizes that leaders and writers must communicate in the language of the persons they address if they wish to evoke response. The task of the religious educator would be to communicate in significant symbols of the group, and to seek ways to make the traditional symbols of the Church significant for the contemporary group.

Development Is Influenced by
Complex Interactions

The third feature in Mead's understanding of the development of the self is that social relationships are interactive. What one person does affects another, and vice versa. This is similar to the idea of Rubinstein and Riegel that human persons and the environment are in a dynamic interaction and that both are active participants in the interaction. The person is not passively created by social forces, but is a product of the social process, in which he or she is an active part.

³⁶Mead, The Social Psychology, pp. 224f, 237-241; George H. Mead, "Social Consciousness and the Consciousness of Meaning," Psychological Bulletin, VII 12 (1910), 397-405.

The complexity of interactions can be seen in the process of exchanging gestures. When one person says a cheery "hello" to another, the second person responds. The second person is influenced by the kind of greeting that has been given, but also by his or her own physical and mental state. This means that the second person's response may be a grunt rather than a cheery "hello." This grunt, then, triggers reactions in the first person, who chooses another response. Each person is being influenced by the other, but also by his or her internal thought processes. The interaction is a "mutual adjustment of changing social response to changing social stimulation."³⁷ One gesture calls forth a response gesture, which, in turn, calls forth another gesture, and so on. The gestures modify one another as they emerge. In this way persons influence each other.

Persons may be conscious of their own attitudes in this process of interaction. They may analyze their own responses to various stimuli and adjust their responses accordingly. At the same time, persons can be conscious that their own attitudes affect the response of the other person, so that they can potentially exert a certain amount of control over the response of the other person. Mead

³⁷ Mead, "Social Consciousness," p. 399; cf. Mead, Philosophy of the Present, p. 4.

suggests that one's influence on others is affected, in fact, by one's own self-awareness and intentionality in the interaction process.³⁸ This does not mean that one person can manipulate another as a puppet, but that people can influence others to a greater or lesser degree, and can be more influential if they are self-conscious about it.

Development Is Influenced by Meaning

A fourth feature in Mead's understanding of the developing self is that meaning is created in the interaction. Persons become conscious of their own attitudes in the interaction, and this is their sense of meaning.³⁹ Persons are actively interpreting what is going on, and these interpretations affect what they do. This suggests that meaning emerges only in a social act in which a person is aware of his or her own contribution and attitude. Disengagement does not lead to a sense of meaning.

Meanings are formed and reformed as persons interact with others. Persons attempt to make sense of the world as they have experienced it, and to reformulate their thoughts when new meanings emerge in experience that do not fit with the old meanings. In short, persons apply the

³⁸Mead, "Social Consciousness," p. 403.

³⁹Ibid., p. 405.

scientific method in their thinking.⁴⁰ This would mean that thought should be as faithful to one's total experience as possible--i.e., continuous with one's past and open to change with the new.

Meanings are also learned from one's social group or culture through the communication of symbols.⁴¹ Meaning and value are communicated in interaction, and the culture exists as a vast set of shared meanings and values. These shared meanings and values influence how we act, and how we act may in turn lead to some alteration in the culture's meanings and values.

The Self as Dynamic

All of this is to say that persons inherit from the past and the social group, but they are also involved in selecting stimuli and creating their own environment. In their responses they may take account of the future as well. The nature of human intelligence is "that it builds up its future out of its past."⁴² This means that the

⁴⁰Mead sees this as the process of hypothesis testing, which is the way persons seek to universalize their thoughts without absolutizing them (Mead, "Scientific Method," pp. 214-215).

⁴¹This idea of communicating meanings and values through symbols is a basic assumption of symbolic interaction theory. See: Rose, p. 8.

⁴²Mead, Philosophy of the Act, p. 124. Mead understands the social act to include the influences of past

human response is influenced by both its past and its future, but it is also a creative influence on both. It influences the past by selecting those stimuli from the past to which to respond, and it influences the future by self-consciously responding in the present so as to influence the future response of others and itself.

This relationship that the self has with past and present and future is not a magical one. It is one that develops as the self stands in the present, which is overlapped by past and future. Mead calls this overlapping "sociality," which suggests a social relationship between the past and the future as they come together in the present. The coming together is basic to the nature of reality.

The social character of the universe we find in the situation in which the novel event is in both the old order and the new which its advent heralds. Social-⁴³ity is the capacity of being several things at once.

Again it must be emphasized that for Mead, meaning exists in the present. His understanding of sociality is such that the present is always responsive to the past and the future. This has significant implications from his viewpoint:

This view then frees us from bondage either to past or future. We are neither creatures of the necessity of

on the person's perception, habitual stimulus-response patterns, and an active mental process of interpreting and reconstructing the interaction patterns (ibid., pp. 3f).

⁴³Mead, Philosophy of the Present, p. 49; cf. pp. 51, 64-65.

an irrevocable past, nor of any vision given in the Mount. . . . Our values lie in the present, and past and future gives us only the schedule of the means, and the plans of campaign for their realization.⁴⁴

This view frees us to root deeply into our past, to dream dreams for the future, and to live in both of these worlds in the present.

Educationally, this view suggests the importance of presenting a rich heritage, of reenacting traditional rituals, of encouraging speculation and dreaming about the future, of thinking through ideological visions, and of considering how all of these things inform our present actions.

In general, Mead's social psychology is rich in educational implications, which have never been thoroughly "mined." Douglas Kimmel does draw implications that three types of experience may be particularly important to symbolic interaction in persons: (1) situation experience--offering a greater number of situations from which persons can learn and draw; (2) interaction experience--leading to a greater ability to take the role of the other and interpret significant symbols; and (3) self-experience--leading to a greater ability to see oneself from another's point of view and to build one's self-knowledge.⁴⁵ These

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 90.

⁴⁵Kimmel, p. 58.

types of experience are highly suggestive of what a model of Christian religious education needs to include.

ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD--A METAPHYSICAL VIEW

Alfred North Whitehead offers into this dialogue a metaphysical system. He understands reality itself to be a dynamic interaction between continuity and change. Most significant is Whitehead's fundamental notion that all reality is in process, and that this process is atomistic, i.e., a succession of discrete events. Continuity is real, but it emerges in a succession of events, rather than being characteristic of substances or "things."

This does not mean that we perceive the world as a succession of events, for events are linked together.⁴⁶ Each event inherits from preceding ones and passes on that inheritance to future ones. Antecedent events are not destroyed, but are reproduced in succeeding events (continuity). To this inheritance is added novelty, and as the different elements of the past and future are brought together in the new event, a new synthesis takes place (change). This is the nature of the creative process.⁴⁷

⁴⁶This is what Whitehead means when he says that the world is "divisible but not divided." Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 96.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 365; cf. Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 109;

Creativity is the many becoming one--becoming a new event. Whitehead suggests, "The many become one and are increased by one."⁴⁸ The past is not lost but becomes part of the new and the new is added to the old.

Whitehead understands reality to be a process with continuity and change. He urges that any interpretation of reality must take account of both permanence and flux, order and originality.⁴⁹ Both of these polarities are noteworthy to the Christian educator who must choose how much to emphasize learning the historical tradition and how much to emphasize immediate experience and imaginative thinking.

What Whitehead calls for is the "contrast" between permanence and flux, order and novelty. By "contrast" Whitehead means a higher synthesis which does not eliminate either pole. He affirms, "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and to preserve change amid order."⁵⁰ The result of such synthesizing of continuity and change is greater intensity of feeling.

Whitehead is clearly not suggesting a choice between

Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: Free Press, 1933), pp. 192-193.

⁴⁸Whitehead, Process, p. 32.

⁴⁹Whitehead argues that a factual interpretation of reality requires that the interpreter deal with these contrasting qualities (ibid., pp. 513-515)

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 515.

permanence and flux, nor a "taking turns" between the two. In fact, he criticizes philosophy for giving its attention only to flux or only to permanence or "a wavering balance between the two."⁵¹

What Whitehead is saying is that order and disorder are necessary correlates, both being essential for intensity of experience.⁵² This suggests that religious education which focuses only on the "fundamental lasting truths" or only on the immediate experiences of the group is destined to become lifeless and useless. The lasting truths will suffer from loss of relevance and the immediate experiences will suffer from lack of rootedness.

Basic Processes Enabling Continuity and Change

Whitehead speaks of two kinds of processes. The macroscopic processes take place from one event to another. The microscopic processes take place within a given event. Both processes have elements of continuity and of change.

Macroscopic Process

Macroscopic processes are those which typically take place when an actual event (or occasion emerges from its past. An aerial view of the intersection would reveal

⁵¹Ibid., p. 318.

⁵²Ibid., p. 127.

movement from one moment to the next. This is the change created by the macroscopic process. Change takes place when the emerging occasion is somehow different from those that went before. Persons, for example, may change direction. According to Whitehead, they are still the same persons, but their courses have changed as a result of the influences on them and/or their decisions. In the successions of events, change is simply the emergence of new actual entities.⁵³

Whitehead wants to discard the idea of enduring substances without discarding the ideas that there is both endurance and change in experience and that completed entities do not pass away into oblivion, but continue to influence emerging entities. He says, "We have certainly to make room in philosophy for the contrasted notions, one that every actual entity endures, and the other that every morning is a new fact with its measure of change."⁵⁴ For Whitehead this means that an event continues to have influence and, in this sense, it endures. Each emerging event involves some continuity (repetition of the earlier events) and some change (the transformation of these past data into something novel).

⁵³Ibid., pp. 33f, 92.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 207.

Microscopic Process

The microscopic process is the integration process which takes place within a given event as it receives objective data and transforms these into a new unity. This is revealed not through an aerial view of the intersection but through a close-up view of the emerging event. It is described as the process by which the many become one.⁵⁵ This simply means that all the influences of the past are synthesized into the new event.

Each emerging event is influenced by its past, but it also has a "subjective aim," which is its own individual purpose and which gives direction to its becoming.⁵⁶ The data of the past make possible continuity, and the subjective aim makes possible the subject's own unique decision.

This microscopic process is analogous to the interaction of the objective "me" and the subjective "I" in Mead's description of the process of human development. The actual entity has the potential for continuity in its inheritance of the given past, and the potential for change in the individual decision it makes as it brings together the past in a new and unique unity. As a new event, it becomes data for other emerging events, thus adding its own uniqueness to the potential of the future.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 321.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 134, 37.

⁵⁷For Whitehead the actual occasion itself has a

Complex Phenomena Contributing to
Continuity and Change

In addition to the basic macroscopic and microscopic processes, Whitehead describes some more complex phenomena which have bearing on continuity and change. A brief look at the phenomena of novelty, endurance, and contrast will illumine the above discussion and introduce some of the complexities and possibilities.

Novelty

The phenomenon of novelty has been touched on above. Whitehead suggests that each event is novel in itself.⁵⁸ This means that every actual entity is in some way, however small, different from all that has gone before or will follow. As we saw above, an actual entity is never simply the sum of its physical parts (i.e., its inheritance of the past, objective world). It is, in fact, bipolar--both physical and mental. The mental, or conceptual, pole of a becoming occasion influences the occasion's subjective responses to and integration with the physical experience.⁵⁹

three-fold character: (1) the given past; (2) the subjective character aimed at concrescence, and (3) the superjective character which is its pragmatic contribution to creativity (ibid., p. 134; cf. pp. 248-252).

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 31-32, 135, 143.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 165; cf. Whitehead, Adventures, pp. 192-194.

The presence of novelty gives insight into how God is involved in becoming occasions, i.e., as "the ground of all order and of all originality."⁶⁰ Whitehead appeals to the concept of God to explain that which is not explicable from the data of the physical world, i.e., that for which there is no "naturalistic" cause. God contributes novelty to the emerging event. God is present in the world and is part of the reality to be experienced. Further, God's lure influences the subjective aim of each emerging event. Each event stands in relationship to God, and what the event inherits from the past is transformed as God calls forward to new possibilities.⁶¹

Novelty can break into reality in unexpected ways, but it can then be passed from event to event, from generation to generation. The Exodus was a novel event in the life of the Hebrew people, but the novelty became part of the tradition as it was preserved in the shared memory of the people. Whitehead calls this phenomenon the process by which novelty is passed on, and it is represented in memory. The cumulation of memory is the way Whitehead describes personal identity through time.⁶² Persons'

⁶⁰Whitehead, Process, p. 164.

⁶¹John B. Cobb, Jr., and David R. Griffin, Process Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 28-29.

⁶²Whitehead describes this process as canalization (Whitehead, Process, pp. 163-164)

identities are tied to their memories, and the richness of their memories contributes to the richness of their personhood. This is similar to Mead's view that the cumulation of "me's" affects the development of the self.

Endurance

A phenomenon standing in contrast to novelty is endurance. Through endurance a series of actual occasions inherit a particular characteristic(s) from one another. Human beings are complexes of many enduring objects,⁶³ so persons have many aspects of themselves that do not seem to change much through time, such as their physical appearance, their ways of responding to stress, their central religious beliefs, and so forth.

Whitehead, then, has given us clues to explain both radical change through novelty and persistent characteristics through endurance. We are left now with the task of understanding the relationship between this novelty and this endurance. Whitehead observes that there is no evidence that unwavering endurance (or pure continuity with the past) is even possible.⁶⁴ An inevitable tension exists

⁶³Whitehead defines an enduring object as "a linear succession of actual occasions forming a historical route in which some defining characteristic is inherited by each occasion from its predecessors" (ibid., p. 301). A complex of many enduring objects is a "corpuscular society" (pp. 166-167, 301).

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 285.

between novelty and enduring structure. Whitehead deals with this by suggesting that there are organic and inorganic occasions within a living society (e.g., a person).⁶⁵ Together these create both novelty and enduring structure. A person, by definition, embodies both repetitive and originative processes--both processes of continuity and of change.

These different processes are integrated by central occasions which organize other occasions. The succession of these central occasions constitutes the living person, or the "enduring personality."⁶⁶ Thus, the human person is a complex social organization, in which the elements of continuity and change are complexly interacting and co-ordinated.

Contrast

Now, if human persons are defined in terms of both continuity and change, then the question arises of how these two are balanced or synthesized. What dynamics are operative, and in what ways can the appropriate interaction of

⁶⁵In the organic occasions, reversion takes place in the mental pole so that novelty is introduced. An organism is alive where novelty arises within it which cannot be explained simply by physical inheritance (ibid., pp. 153-157, 159).

⁶⁶Whitehead describes the enduring personality as "the historic route of living occasions which are severally dominant in the body at successive instants" (ibid., p. 182;

continuity and change be enhanced? We have already seen that the coordination within a living society is influenced by central occasions. What happens though in a given event when the forces of the past and the forces of novelty meet? Whitehead's idea of "contrast" is particularly fruitful in approaching this question.

A contrast is the means by which radically different influences are brought together into unity.⁶⁷ An example of a contrast would be the dilemma faced by a boy entering a new school. The boy knows how he acted in order to make friends in his former school, but these things do not work in his new school. The "contrast" for this student would be the working out of a new way of behaving which takes account of his old patterns and the demands of the new situation. In this case, the old patterns could ruin his chances for making friends in his new school, but to completely conform to the expectations of the new school could mean the loss of his own sense of integrity. What is called for is a new synthesis which involves both continuity with his past and change for his present situation. This could be a radical change in his behavior in

see also pp. 166-167).

⁶⁷In Whitehead's words, contrasts are "modes of synthesis of entities in one prehension" (ibid., p. 33).

this new situation, a decision to seek friends outside the school, or any number of things in between.

A contrast makes it possible for an event to be informed by a maximal amount of data, with as little data as possible being ignored or dismissed. The result is a decision which has some kind of order, unity, and harmony.⁶⁸ This is an important phenomenon in human development. Persons normally develop in the direction of increased complexity, i.e., toward higher forms of order in which the growing wealth of experience and novelty are held together. This takes place in the process of converting opposition into contrast.

Process as a Social Phenomenon

All that has been said about process leads back to the emphasis that all process is social. By "social" we mean that all events are interrelated.⁶⁹ The events of the past actually become incorporated in the new event as it forms.

Whitehead's view of process as social has some radical implications for our understanding of the present. For Whitehead, a person's relationship to the past and future is never an exercise in abstraction. The relationship

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 167; cf. pp. 163-176.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 309; cf. Cobb and Griffin, p. 23.

is internal rather than external. It comes from the past and future entering into the present. The past is physically felt in the present, and the present anticipates the future in which it will live. This explains why old memories come back to haunt us and dreams pull us forward. Whitehead's idea is closely akin to Mead's concept of sociality. The emerging occasion lives in both worlds as it passes from reenaction of the past to anticipation of the future.⁷⁰ The shift from the one into the other is the result of the occasion's mentality, the novelty of which influences the shape of the occasion.⁷¹

One implication of this discussion is that the present moment is the key to understanding the interaction of continuity and change. For Whitehead, as for Mead, the past can only really be interpreted through the present.⁷² This suggests that the focal point for integration of continuity and change is the event in which these come together; therefore, to facilitate integration we must create conditions which are conducive to the emerging occasion's own synthesizing process.

⁷⁰Whitehead, Adventures, pp. 191-195.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, pp. 193-194; cf. Cobb and Griffin, p. 23.

⁷²Whitehead, Religion, pp. 82-83.

Reality as Dynamic

The implications of this exploration of Whitehead's metaphysics are vast, but a few will be highlighted that are particularly relevant to a model of education.

One implication of the idea of the interrelatedness of past, present, and future is that Christian religious educators can never ignore any of these. In our time, much of the futurist movement does attempt to deny the past. Such an effort is neither desirable nor possible. Likewise, one cannot ignore the future. Norman Pittenger considers the Christian Church itself as a social process, and he suggests that we in the church live in the present, from the past, and toward the future.⁷³ An educational model drawing from this insight would recognize the interconnectedness of past, present, and future, and would seek to enhance persons' awareness and integration of all three.

Charles Hartshorne adds to this idea when he says, "How we look backward is how we decide forward."⁷⁴ This suggests that movement forward requires an awareness of

⁷³Norman Pittenger, The Christian Church as Social Process (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), pp. 78-79.

⁷⁴Charles Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1970), p. 318.

where we have been. This means that "turning over a new leaf" requires thorough reading in the earlier pages of one's book. It implies that revitalizing Christian religious education requires serious study of earlier modes of religious education. It implies that educating people for the 1980s and 90s requires helping them understand and evaluate the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, as well as earlier centuries.

Finally, Whitehead's understanding of the role of dogma reveals something of the dynamic interplay he sees between permanence and flux--continuity and change.

A system of dogmas may be the ark within which the Church floats safely down the flood-tide of history. But the Church will perish unless it opens its window and lets out the dove to search for an olive branch.⁷⁵

We can expand Whitehead's metaphor and recognize ourselves floating in this ark filled with animals which we so graciously brought on board and cannot now get rid of. We can be grateful that on our journey, which is so laden with the decisions of our past, we can indeed open a window and launch a new search. We can be even more grateful that God has placed a rainbow over our search, filled with promises that lure us forward.

⁷⁵Whitehead, Religion, p. 140.

CONCLUSIONS FOR AN EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Having explored some of the generalities and technicalities of Mead's and Whitehead's thought, we can now attempt to draw together the insights into human nature. Drawing from Mead's social psychology and Whitehead's metaphysics, we come to a dynamic view of the development of human persons, which has fruitful implications for Christian religious education. It also offers hope for the particular dilemma of transcending the polarity of historical tradition and contemporary experience, and the related polarity of the community and the individual.

The aim of these concluding remarks is to draw together some central insights and to propose a model of human nature that will inform education. Hopefully, these insights will inform our work in such everyday contexts as this one:

I teach a group of sixth graders in our church. I walked in the first week with a plan well-made, but that first meeting was a dreadful disappointment for me and for the children too, I am sure. In frustration I reflected later on the morning. All of the typical answers rushed through my thoughts. I immediately assumed that something had to be fixed so that the next meeting of the class would go better.

Then, my inner voice of protest spoke: "I don't want your easy answers. Don't tell me about the latest

teaching method or tightening up on discipline." My protest voice spoke a loud "No" to the equally easy answer of giving up on the Church School altogether.

I thought about these children who come to this place with so many different expectations--expectations that Sunday School is always dull, expectations that church is a place to go because my parents make me, expectations that the only way to tolerate this system is to undermine it, fears that no one will listen to me here. These are children who have varied histories, and some of those histories carry quite a lot of pain. These are children who live in a culture where church-going is unusual--certainly not a widely accepted part of life. These are children who are part of a church that focuses its ministry largely on adults. These are children who have been stimulated more than regulated--who have travelled, read, lived in the media culture, and participated in countless activities. These are children who know little of the Jewish-Christian story. Oh, they know something about a few key Biblical characters, and they know something about the life of their own church, but they know nothing of the 2000 years of Christian tradition between the New Testament Church and the present. And they know little or nothing about the life of the church universal in the world today. They do know that the issues of the world are large and that the future is threatened by hunger, poverty, political turmoil, and war.

In short, these children are living in relationship to many persons, to their own histories, to a historical faith tradition, to a local faith community, to a complex world of political struggle and war and injustices, and to a very uncertain future.

This is where religious education must begin--right in the middle--at the intersection. Religious education must begin where person meets person, where person faces future, where person probes past, where person confronts contemporary issues. Persons stand in relationship to God and in relation to the world of past, present, and future. To begin education anywhere other than the middle of these relationships is to split off some segment of life and artificially "treat" it in isolation from every other part.

The old "life experience to Bible" or "Bible to life experience" debate is antiquated. Neither the Bible nor present life experience should be the starting point for Christian religious education. The starting point is the intersection, and at this intersection is not only the Bible and the present life experience of individuals but parents, church folk, the historical church tradition, the fears and hopes for the future of the world, the culture in which the church exists, the issues of the global village, and God. That intersection is a big place. It is an awesome place, and none of us can think of it without some fear. This is where we minister.

Assumptions About Human Nature

But how do we describe that intersection so that it helps us know what to do in education? Here we return to the three basic assumptions put forth earlier. They can

now be elaborated under the influence of Mead, Whitehead, and countless others.

ASSUMPTION 1: THE PERSONS AT THE INTERSECTION ARE IN PROCESS. THEY ARE SOMEHOW CONTINUOUS WITH THEIR PAST AND SOMEHOW CHANGING AS THEY MOVE INTO THEIR FUTURE.

Educationally, this suggests that an individual is never "finished," and that persons have opportunities for transformation at all points in their lives. This suggests further that persons are influenced by both past events and future possibilities. Teachers, then, need to highlight both, rather than to look purely backward or purely forward if they are to stimulate and guide students' self-development.⁷⁶

Proposition 1: God is active in that process.

Persons develop in the midst of a continuing succession of events in which God is always active. God is experienced in each event as part of the objective past and future possibility, and as the guiding force to the process. God has been, will be, and is now. God does not determine the process, but guides it through persuasive love.

This suggests that neither education nor any other ministry of the church is a fully human enterprise. God is in, under, and above them all. The human work may be

⁷⁶This is the purpose of education according to Whitehead in: Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. v.

moved and guided by God, but it should not be confused with God's work. God's work transcends human efforts, and human efforts are never identical with God's. This idea of God's transcending power keeps the educational ministry in perspective so that we do not take ourselves too seriously. It also offers a hope which pulls always to the future--a hope that God will lead us, will transform our meagre efforts into something of worth, and will act unceasingly in the world to create and redeem.

Proposition 2: Each event in the process involves decision. The past, present, and future come together in the new occasion, and the way these come together is a decision of the occasion itself and is unique to it. The rich young ruler wants to inherit eternal life. He meets Jesus at the intersection. He has long lived with the commands of God and is confronted now by the challenge of Jesus. The decision is the man's. It has to be made now at the intersection.

Educationally, this reminds us that the teacher cannot force decision. The teacher cannot even force a certain interpretation of the past or future on anyone else. The task is to enhance the potential within the person or group to make its own decision, rather than to prepackage a decision and try to "sell" it. This means that a teacher must learn to let go of an idea or an experience and allow the students or group to deal with it in their own indi-

vidual ways. This may mean, for example, that teachers should be wary of overinterpreting an experience, or overmoralizing on a story. The teachers must attempt to be open to novelty emerging from the students as well as elsewhere.

At the same time, students need the opportunity to learn about and explore the knowledge and beliefs of the past and to probe some of these fully and deeply. This calls for the fine art in teaching of balancing breadth and depth, imagination and disciplined skill. A common preoccupation in recent times has been with providing freedom for students and shying away from lectures, readings, and input of any kind. These are sometimes thought to be limiting and oppressive. The suggestion here is that this input might, in fact, contribute to the students' ability to decide freely by building the students' range of knowledge and their ability to think from various perspectives.

ASSUMPTION 2: GOD AND OTHER PERSONS AND THE WORLD ACTUALLY ENTER INTO THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF EACH PERSON AT THE INTERSECTION. PERSONS, THEN, ARE INTERNALLY RELATED TO GOD, TO OTHER PERSONS, AND TO THE WORLD.

Proposition 3: The person is influenced by all aspects of the environment. Persons are transformed through a myriad of external and internal events--events in the physical world, in the culture, in interpersonal relationships, and in the person's own self. This means that

physiological, chemical, and electrical processes are going on within the person all the time. At the same time the individual person is interacting within a society of other persons, ideas, physical events, etc. All of these events form the past that is prehended by the individual. Thus, they enter into that person's experience and into the person's expectations of the future.

Educationally, this suggests a need to consider all aspects of a person's external and internal environment in planning. This suggests that persons' cognitive and affective developmental levels are important considerations, as well as their cultural context and social relationships. This notion underlines the importance, for example, of sensing where students are in their own personal concerns and ideas, of creating ethnic groupings for some educational endeavors (where one's own ethnic culture can be dealt with with some seriousness and depth), of using curriculum appropriate to the development of students, of facilitating significant interpersonal experiences, of taking account of the physical environment, cultural influences, and so forth.

Proposition 4: The person at the intersection is both aware and unaware of what is going on. The individual's interaction with the many social and environmental forces is both conscious and unconscious.

Educationally, this implies that significant symbols may be quite powerful, even when they are not consciously understood. Music, visual symbols, rituals, and personal interchanges carry messages far more powerful than we may realize at first glance. We are apt to see children squirming during worship and assume that they are learning nothing, but a great deal is being communicated and received consciously or unconsciously. They are learning that this experience means something to the people around them (or that it does not), that God is somehow mysteriously present in this experience (or that God is absent), and that this community has certain beliefs about God and Jesus Christ and Christian discipleship. Educators must take seriously and plan for these significant symbols, as well as for the conscious and subliminal factors in the educational setting (such as the material to be presented and aspects of the physical environment). All contexts in which education takes place are settings where these factors are important. We can easily assume that visual symbols are important in worship and teacher-student relationships, in study, but this is to ignore the potency of visual symbols in the classroom and the smile across the pew in worship.

ASSUMPTION 3: THE PERSON IS BOTH ACTING AND BEING ACTED UPON. THESE RELATIONSHIPS AT THE INTERSECTION ARE

INTERACTIVE IN THAT PERSONS ARE ACTING UPON AND ACTED UPON BY BOTH GOD AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM.

If the person is always interacting then he or she is shaping the world and being shaped by it. Persons interact with other persons and communities, with themselves and with God. Both the continuities with the past and the radical changes come out of these interactions. Persons are influenced by the social group, but they also contribute to preserving or changing the social patterns by what they do. Likewise, persons are acted upon and influenced by God, and God is influenced by persons and what they do and say.

Educationally, this assumption underlines the importance of considering the student as part of the educational process. One does this not just to be "open" or "nice," but because the student will interact with every aspect of the setting. By taking this seriously one can enhance the possibilities of the mutual interaction and be more genuinely open to what may come from the interaction. This notion puts the question of openness in teaching in a broader perspective than the debate between open vs. closed classrooms, or permissive vs. strict discipline. It protects against oversentimentalizing student-centeredness and stresses that any educational setting is interactive by nature, involving both teacher and students and both community and individuals. If either part of the interaction

is underplayed, the results will be a loss in the potential learning and transformation that could emerge.

Conclusions for Educational Practice

The most general conclusion from the above is that the ability of a person or a community to integrate continuity and change can be enhanced educationally. This would involve stimulating the interactive relationship the individuals have with their environment, creating rich and varied experiences, enhancing their own reflective abilities, and stimulating novel ideas. This is the point of the theory which needs extensive "mining" for implications, and empirical testing for effective means to accomplish the goal. Some initial thoughts about ways of enhancing the integration of continuity and change in Christian education are:

1. Modes of presentation which use or develop significant symbols for the individuals or group;
2. Curriculum and methods which bring the Christian tradition to life and call attention to particular elements of it (in conjunction with discussion of how present experience relates to this past);
3. Curriculum and methods which urge the imaginary reconstruction of the future and the thinking through of utopian and Biblical ideals (in conjunction with

discussion of how present experience relates to this future and these ideals);

4. The creation or interjection of novel ideas and experiences;
5. The encouragement of students' own "flights of imagination" and novel ideas;
6. In-depth probing into ideas that are presented or emerge (so that breadth and depth are emphasized);
7. Emphasis on mastery of certain basic skills and knowledge, and probing of this knowledge in reflection and discussion;
8. Encouragement of interaction within the group and outside, with emphasis on developing interaction skills (e.g., taking the role of the other);
9. Encouragement of self-reflection, with emphasis on one's inner thoughts and conflicts and seeing oneself from another's point of view;
10. Offering practice in decision-making (e.g., through case studies, or in actual decision situations);
11. Modeling how integration can take place (e.g., listening oneself to new ideas and thinking about how these might fit with, or change, the content that is being presented).

PART III

THE TRADITIONING MODEL OF EDUCATION

We began this dissertation bemoaning the pendulum swinging in Christian religious education between an emphasis on the historical tradition and on contemporary experience. This swinging implies that we must be either past- or present-oriented, and that the future plays a minimal role in education whatever choice we make. Having recognized this dilemma, we proceeded to make the daring claim that a model of education just might be possible that would transcend the dualism between past and present and deal seriously with the future as well. The promise was made of a new educational model which would maximize the possibility of both continuity and change.

In the three chapters which follow, this traditioning model will be described and elaborated. The reader is invited to probe, question, and experiment with the model. This is the way in which the model itself can contribute to the possibilities for continuity and change in the educational ministry of the church.

The challenge inherent in presenting this model is the same challenge that is inherent in using it as a guide. Dualistic language and ideas are so deeply ingrained in the commonsense thinking of the West that any plea to

transcend the dualism of continuity and change is met with answers which try to balance the two poles (giving each equal time) or to counteract the pole which is being overstressed by stressing the opposite one. Either answer maintains the dualism. What is being said here is far more radical than it may sound on first hearing. What is being said is that the more continuous we are with our past, the greater is the possibility for transformation. What is also being said is that the more we change, the more continuous we are with our past.

The fulness of this claim can only be understood by describing the traditioning model which emerges from it. This is the intended purpose of the remaining chapters.

Chapter 5

A TRADITIONING MODEL OF EDUCATION

What is this traditioning model of Christian religious education? We have said that the model is based on certain assumptions about the Church as a traditioning community and about persons as being in process. As suggested in Chapter 1, the central task in the traditioning model is to involve persons in the living Christian tradition--that is, in traditioning. Traditioning is understood as a process by which the historical tradition is received and transformed as the Christian community encounters God and the world in present experience, and as that community is lured forward toward the future. It is a process by which God's gifts are received and passed on. Because God has acted in the past, many of these gifts are passed on through the historical traditions. Because God acts in the present, many of these gifts are discovered in the contemporary encounter. Because God will act in the future, many of these gifts will be experienced as promise. A traditioning model of education, then, is one in which persons are formed and transformed as they receive the historical traditions, and as they encounter God and the world in the present and in future possibilities.

The traditioning model is one in which the starting point of education is the person(s) in relation to God and the world of past, present, and future. Persons in relationship are continually receiving from God and the world and being transformed. Persons in relationship are active participants in these interactions. They are influenced, and so are God and the world.

The foundations for this traditioning model are themselves new. In Chapters 3 and 4 we have looked at new perspectives on the Christian community and on the nature of persons. We have recognized that the Christian community is a traditioning community, participating in an ongoing process of traditioning which is never fixed or finished and which is still going on. This in itself is a very threatening idea. Witness the persons who will not have a woman minister marry them because of the Biblical injunction against women speaking out in church or because that would not be "traditional." Witness the person who is angry at hearing the minister suggest in a sermon that Isaiah may have been written by three or more different people and that Isaiah I and II may have been written over nearly 300 years. Both of these responses reveal the degree of threat that is inherent in recognizing that the church's tradition is emerging, rather than poured out in completed form during a few key periods of history.

We have also turned upside down some commonsense

assumptions about human nature. We have recognized, as would proponents of a socialization model of education, that persons are indeed formed by their heritage and their community. We have recognized, as would proponents of a reconstructionist model of education, that persons are actors in the world, capable of critical reflection on their own community and of transforming action. We have recognized that in every moment of decision persons are influenced by past, present, and future and that their decisions will always be in some way continuous with their past and in some way transformed and unique. This again is threatening because it suggests to the individualist that persons cannot escape the formative forces on them from outside themselves. It suggests to the isolationist that persons cannot escape the impact that their actions will have on the world and on God. Thus, we acknowledge that we as human beings are always in process, we are always both acting and acted upon.

The very large remaining question, of course, is what is the shape of this traditioning model. In this chapter the shape will be sketched and the claims and characteristics of the model will be examined. In the final two chapters the form of the model will be elaborated in more detail. Chapter 6 deals with aims, contexts, and methods, and Chapter 7, with curriculum.

THE SHAPE OF THE MODEL

We have said that the central task in the traditioning model is to involve persons in the living Christian tradition. The two dimensions of that task are hermeneutics and transformation.

The hermeneutical dimension is the opening up of persons to their historical traditions, their present experiences, and their future hopes. These are all part of the Christian story. To engage in hermeneutics is to communicate this story, to interpret it, and to encourage others to interpret it. These interpretations are done by persons standing at the intersection relating to many aspects of the story at one time. The influences can seem overwhelming.

The transformative dimension of the traditioning model is the synthesizing of all of these influences. To engage in transformation is to encourage persons to be open to the future. The synthesizing that takes place at the intersection recreates the persons and the tradition.

The intersection, then, is the place where both interpretation and transformation are happening. Neither can happen without the other. People will be transformed as they interpret the various parts of the story, and people will engage in interpretation when they experience transformation.

The Heart of the Matter

We have recognized in Chapter 3 that the traditioning community is an interpreting and transforming community. The unity of hermeneutics and transformation is at the heart of this traditioning model of education. Only as we see the inseparability of these tasks do we see how continuity and change require each other. The tendency to dichotomize continuity and change will seem unthinkable if we recognize that the hermeneutical and transformative dimensions of Christian religious education cannot be pulled apart.

Imagine persons at intersections. Some intersections will be crowded and loud, while others may seem deserted and quiet. Whatever the intersection, the persons entering there will be confronted with many influences to interpret, and these influences will be transformative. These influences may be from within the persons or without, but the very act of interpreting the influences will be transformative.

What does an intersection really look like? Let me tell you a story:

Once upon a time, the word of the Lord came to a man named Jonah. The Lord said to Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and speak out against it for its wickedness. Jonah responded by fleeing from God's presence. He sought out a ship headed for Tarshish and went aboard.

Now a terrible storm began and everyone on board the ship became frightened--everyone but Jonah, that

is. Jonah was inside the ship fast asleep. His sleep was interrupted by the captain of the ship who thought a prayer from Jonah to his God might calm the storm. Then someone had the brilliant idea of casting lots to see whose evil was causing this storm. The lot naturally fell to Jonah, whose fate then was to be thrown into the sea.

In the next scene Jonah was in the belly of a great fish lifting up a psalm of thanksgiving. After three days and nights, the Lord spoke to the fish who promptly vomited Jonah onto the dry land. Poor Jonah had had a long sojourn inside the fish and now had been spit out upon the land. He was not to have a moment's peace, however, for the Lord came again and said to Jonah to go to Nineveh and proclaim God's message. This time Jonah went and did as he was told.

The people in Nineveh did indeed hear Jonah. They repented and turned immediately away from their evil ways. Now Jonah had done his duty and the results were overwhelming, but Jonah was not impressed. Jonah had spoken God's word and that word had indeed transformed all of Nineveh--the great, evil, foreign city. That hardly seemed reason to celebrate for poor Jonah. He had gone to such trouble to proclaim that Nineveh would be overthrown only to have God reverse the rules and deliver Nineveh after all.

This is a story of intersections. Note three messages in this story. Note that Jonah repeatedly found himself in the midst of an intersection. The story opens with the word of the Lord coming to Jonah, and we have no indication that Jonah had sought that word out. Jonah was moving into an intersection in relationship to God whether

or not he wanted to be there. God's word was spoken and God's command was given. Now for us to speak of the starting point of education as the person(s) in relation to God and the world is to recognize that persons always do stand in those relationships even when they wish they could escape.

Notice also that Jonah made decisions. Jonah decided to flee to Tarshish, to sleep in the bottom of the boat, to offer to be thrown overboard in order to calm the storm, to pray to God from the belly of the fish, to go to Nineveh and proclaim God's word, and to declare his anger to God. At every intersection Jonah was confronted by God and God's command. At every intersection he was also confronted by his knowledge of Nineveh, his anticipation of what God and the people of Nineveh would do, and his own reluctance as a Jew to reach out to this evil Gentile city. All of the influences poured down on him, and each time he made a decision, that decision was his own unique response to all of these influences.

Notice finally that at every intersection Jonah was engaged in interpretation and transformation. He was transforming these influences into some kind of decision, even deciding at points to ignore and run away from certain of these influences. He was daring enough at some intersections to speak God's word--in the form of a psalm as he prayed from the belly of the fish, and in the form

of a proclamation as he spoke to the people in Nineveh. Notice that speaking God's word was not a conclusive ending to the story in either case. The speaking only opened him to more changing. The psalm did not restore Jonah to a comfortable, placid relationship to God, but to God's renewed command to go to Nineveh. Even the proclamation to Nineveh did not restore Jonah to a quiet, peaceful existence. God's response to Nineveh's repentance forced Jonah to confront his own prejudices against the wicked Gentile city. The "moral" of this story is simply this: that one dare not interpret the influences on oneself if one is not open to transformation. Likewise, one dare not be transformed and go to Nineveh if one is not willing to interpret the consequences of that change. The act of interpreting is always loaded with the power to transform, and the act of transformation always forces our reinterpretation. The more we are involved in one, the more we will be involved in the other.

Content

To understand the shape of the traditioning model, one quickly wants to know what is to be the content of education, or the texts to be interpreted. The model is one in which the content of education is the past, present, and hoped for experience of the Christian community. The many different expressions of these are the texts to

be interpreted.

Experience here is intended as a big concept. It includes the kind of sharing of immediate experience emphasized by experiential education, but it is much more. It includes the community's experience of God and of itself and of the world. It includes the experience of individuals and of entire communities (local church or parish, denomination, universal Church). It includes the community's experience of itself as an institution, and, also, of God and the world.

To say that this traditioning model has for its content the experience of the Christian community is to recognize the unity of tradition and experience. We said in Chapter 1 that experience is a process of observing, participating in, and living through events. One could say that persons' experience includes their actions and the actions upon them. What we often call tradition is really a saga of experiences and interpretations of these. The tradition is the expression through beliefs, actions, and values of that which the Jewish and Christian communities have experienced in the past and are experiencing now. If tradition is the story of experiences, then the two are inseparable. Tradition cannot be bound to the the past, and experience cannot be bound to the present. Experiences continue to happen, and these continue to be woven into the tradition. This view of tradition and

experience involves the recognition that the Christian community is the product of its past, yes, but it is also the product of its present experience and its future hope. The content of education must necessarily come from all three, for all three come together in the traditioning process.

Method

The methods in this model are hermeneutics and transformation--telling and pondering on the story and transforming the story. Each of these flows from the others and back again, so there is no prioritizing or ordering of the methods. Here we will deal with the specific methods of transmission and reflection (which are particularly related to the hermeneutical function in traditioning) and transformation (which is related to the transformative dimension).

Transmission is communication, and it includes all the range of methods by which the community's beliefs, actions, and values are communicated. Transmissive methods respond to the hermeneutical question of "what."

What have been the experiences and ideas of the Christian community, what are they now, and what is to be hoped for? Transmission, then, is not just the handing down of the past, but is also the communication of the contemporary witness of faith and of future hopes. This is the telling

of the story--the sharing of ideas, actions, and images which have become part of that story. It also includes the transmission of cultural (e.g., knowledge of other religions, the human sciences, and so forth) for the sake of instigating a dialogue between this knowledge and the community's story.

Transmission can take place through the didactic methods often associated with "transmissive education," and also through cultural forms (such as art, liturgy, and music) normally associated with "socialization models" of education. We need not abandon entirely the schooling/instructional paradigm as John Westerhoff would have us do.¹ Neither do we need to expect that all of the church's education will take place in the classroom. Our hope lies in the recognition of the aliveness and richness of the story.

The educational ministry needs, then, to be enriching--communicating the various expressions, memories, and hopes of the community. These expressions, memories, and hopes have emerged as the community has related to God and to the world. The communication of these is the way that persons will be able to enter into experiences other than their own and broaden the ideas, actions, and images

¹John Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith? (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 6-25.

out of which they live.² This is the way persons come to have a rich story background in which they find resources for interpreting their present experience. Ross Snyder suggests that persons seek to interpret their life experience by creating a meaningful saga that explains the events in their lives. He further suggests that this creation of saga is influenced by the bigger stories that people know.³ One can conclude, then, that the richer our story background, the greater are our resources for interpreting our immediate experience. By story is meant not only the Biblical story, but also the church's historical story and the story emerging in the church and in our globe today. The story, or saga, includes all the experiences of the Jewish-Christian community woven together into a pattern of meaning. Education, then, is the communication

²This idea has been developed particularly by Snyder. See, for example: Ross Snyder, Young People and Their Culture (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 162-163. In an earlier unpublished book, Snyder talks about "ministry of the pulse of tradition." This ministry involves helping people discover and enter into that pulse of tradition, which is an active world of persons, meanings, and intention. This involvement in the pulse of tradition enriches both the persons and the tradition. See: Ross Snyder, "Educating a People of God" (Chicago: Chicago Theological Seminary, 1962) (Mimeographed)

³Snyder, Young People, p. 69. Snyder develops the idea of story in his writings of the 1960s, but in the 1970s he shifts his language from "stories" to "sagas." He understands a person's saga to be his or her life story, with particular focus on the meanings in that story and on that person's relatedness to self, others, and God.

of a wealth of experiences--experiences which are historical and contemporary, experiences of self and of others, experiences of passionate involvement and action, experiences of struggling together with theological concepts and life issues, and experiences of celebration. The transmission of these forms the reservoir from which the community draws. A reservoir of water provides a store of water from which persons draw nourishment for themselves and for their plantings. A reservoir of community experience provides a depth out of which persons can draw models of action and insight, as well as resources for giving birth to new actions and insights.

Not only does transmission provide a wealth of experience, but it also provides persons with a sense of connectedness--connectedness to other people, other times, and other places. Surely the first hearers of Mark's gospel were comforted to hear how many times Jesus' disciples had failed to understand or to act, even in the midst of their following Jesus. This is not so different from children's enjoyment of stories of their parents, particularly the stories of their parents' mischief and mistakes. The sense of shared experience, or shared humanness links persons together. For something to have meaning for us, it must be something we can connect with and, therefore, something we have learned about or experienced in some

way.⁴ This requires the activity of transmission.

In addition to transmission, reflection must be a prominent method in Christian religious education. The two together are particularly related to the hermeneutical function in the traditioning model. Reflection is pondering both that content which is being transmitted and one's own actions. This is asking the "why" questions of hermeneutics--the questions of meaning. In doing this kind of thinking, persons ponder the past, present, and future witnesses of faith. These witnesses are brought into dialogue with the persons' own experiences--their own actions and the actions upon them. These people can then engage in an inner conversation in which they reflect on the various witnesses of faith and experience. Out of these reflections persons can emerge with their own interpretations and decisions.

Reflection includes both the objective mode of thinking about an idea or experience and the subjective mode of thinking into that idea or experience. The former can be called critical reflection, and the latter, depth reflection. This double emphasis is similar to Bernard Meland's idea that both critical inquiry and affective imagination are important to the appreciative consciousness

⁴Dewey emphasized this in his philosophy of education. See particularly: John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1938).

of the human spirit.⁵ Critical reflection is stepping back from an idea or event, and critiquing it from various points of view. This includes the critical examination of oneself and one's community, which is so essential to the prophetic functions of ministry. Depth reflection is immersing oneself in an idea or event. It is living with a concept. As persons actually live with an idea, it begins to take shape in more fullness. Critical reflection is looking at two or three points of view on human despair and analyzing these against each other. It may include looking for and analyzing the despair in oneself and one's own community. Depth reflection is entering into the life world of a person whose life is characterized by despair. Both contribute to the fullness of our understanding.

Two of the most fruitful contemporary appeals to bridge the split of present from past and future have come from Ross Snyder and Thomas Groome. Snyder appeals to a creative meeting of past, present, and future, drawing heavily from George Herbert Mead's concept of sociality.⁶ Groome appeals to a critical reflection on present action in light of the historical tradition and future

⁵ Bernard Meland, Higher Education and the Human Spirit (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 79-109.

⁶ See particularly: Ross Snyder, "Boisen's Understanding of Religious Experience," Chicago Theological Seminary Register, LXVII, 1 (1977), 33-51.

hope.⁷ These two approaches of Snyder and Groome are amazingly similar at the heart, but the former is highly subjective while the latter is predominantly objective. Snyder does more in the depth reflection mode, and Groome, in critical reflection.

Are we to hear that the meeting of past, present, and future must be dominated either by subjective or by the objective? Is the creative, interpersonal culturing of Ross Snyder incompatible with the critical reflection of Tom Groome? Certainly persons focused on depth reflection can, and often do, reject critical reflection as irrelevant. Likewise, persons focused on critical reflection often reject depth reflection as unscientific. If personhood has both objective and subjective dimensions, however, as George Herbert Mead would suggest, then to choose between these two emphases in education is a dismal thought. Education for continuity and change needs to maximize both the subjectivity of depth reflection and the objectivity of critical reflection.

Having focused on both the transmitting and reflecting aspects of the hermeneutical function, we turn now to the transformative function in Christian religious

⁷Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); cf. Thomas H. Groome, "A Task of Present Dialectical Hermeneutics," Living Light, XIV, 3 (Fall 1977), 408-423.

education. Through the transforming methods both the tradition and the persons within that tradition are recreated. The heritage is enlarged and the actions of the community are transformed. Transformation is concerned with the "how" questions. How is the community to act in the direction of the Kingdom of God and to create a culture that is Christian--to be open to God's promise and to reconstruct its actions and beliefs and values in light of its past, its present, and its hope? Transformation is initiated by God's action, but we are called to respond to God's gift and God's lure. We are called to impact the world where we are.

This message is different from that of the progressive religious educators and reconstructionists who were optimistic about the possibilities of reconstructing the world through the educational process.⁸ This is more in tune with the theologians of hope who put emphasis on the idea that God calls us toward the future. Moltmann is insistent that God's Kingdom will come through God's promises and not human effort, but he emphasizes the need for human activism in the world. Moltmann asserts that the mission of the Church is not only proclaiming faith

⁸See, for example: Theodore Brameld, Toward a Reconstructed Philosophy of Education (New York: Dryden Press, 1956).

and hope, but also transforming life in historic reality.⁹ Persons are called to move in the direction of God's promises.¹⁰ This means that the transformation of persons, of societies, and of the historical tradition itself are essential to our task.

The potential for transformation is maximized by a wealth of transmitted knowledge and by our critical and depth reflection on that knowledge. The transmitted stories themselves have power to transform. The potential for transformation is maximized by our openness to God's spirit moving in and around us. The methods of transformation are prophetic challenge and careful rebuilding of our actions, beliefs, and values. For example, challenging persons to take seriously new knowledge about food sources, land production capability, and population sizes forces persons to question certain traditional understandings of the human response to persons who are poor and hungry. This new knowledge challenges old images of caring and leads to reconstructed images of the ministries of caring. These new images may or may not be foreign to strands in the tradition. They may emerge from the recovery of a lost strand, but they may be distinctly new.

⁹Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 330f.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 120-121.

Whatever we say about transformative methods, we must recognize that what is to be transformed is not just the ills in the secular world but also the Christian community itself. We cannot simply work at transforming society so as to reduce injustice and poverty, while we perpetuate uncritically our own community's tradition. Our community's beliefs and actions may, in fact, be part of the problems. We must be open to transforming our own community as well.

Goals

The primary goals of Christian religious education inherent in this model are knowledge with understanding and the transformation of persons' actions, beliefs, and values. These goals are the results of the hermeneutical and transformative methods. The goals are introduced here and will be expanded in Chapter 6.

Knowledge with understanding results from being engaged in both the transmitting and reflecting methods of hermeneutics. Knowledge is simply perception of, or acquaintance with, ideas and events. The transmissive methods lead primarily to this goal of knowledge. This knowledge offers a background out of which the Christian community can live and to which it can respond. Understanding is grasping the meaning of something. The word suggests both a personal grasping and a mutual

comprehension of meaning. Understanding, then, is the integration of knowledge into one's own perspectives and into perspectives that can be communicated and shared with others. Understanding is transmitted through the methods of depth and critical reflection, which is the search for meaning in ideas and events.

The transformation of belief, action, and values results from the prophetic challenge and rebuilding that is done. Belief is a conviction, or acceptance of something as true. Action is that which we do. It is our response to the multitude of influences on us--the stories which we know, the culture in which we live, and the beliefs and hopes that we hold. Both belief and action are part of the very content which is transmitted and reflected upon. The possibility for transformation of belief and action is opened by the reconstructive work of education. It is opened as well in our interactions with God and others.

These two purposes--knowledge with understanding and transformation of belief and action--give some idea of how one might evaluate what is happening in educational ministry. The evaluation would be two-fold: What has been learned, and what new insights do persons have into the meaning of the events and ideas? What changes are emerging in belief and action? In order to assess the the impact of education in the traditioning model, these

two questions suggest the kinds of evaluation instruments that might be most revealing.

CLAIMS OF THE MODEL

Expanding this account of the traditioning model of Christian religious education involves the elaboration of the claims for the model. These claims bring the model into clearer focus and display its potential for maximizing continuity and change.

The first claim of the traditioning model is that education functions in the community to transmit tradition (both that which is past and that which is emerging now), to enable people to interpret the meaning of their own experience, and to open the possibility of transforming the individuals, the faith community, and the world. The functions, then, are both to conserve and to transform. This idea is easier to say than to understand because the conserving functions are often understood as antithetical to the transforming functions, and vice versa.

That Christian religious education has a function is not disputed, but just what that function is may be debatable. In fact, much recent discussion has been focused more on the context of the educational ministry than on the function. This is particularly true of the advocates of socialization models of education. John Westerhoff, for example, has particularly emphasized the context of

Christian education as the community of faith. He understands the means of education to be enculturation, which itself "focuses on the interactive experiences and environments within which persons act to acquire, sustain, change, and transmit their understandings and ways."¹¹ If the context is the dominant influence on education, then what is going to broaden the visions of persons in a given context beyond their own immediate belief, values, and action? What is going to contribute to the changing that Westerhoff mentions? Concern for function needs to be renewed and brought back to a place of prominence.

The second claim for this model is that it can enable education to maximize both continuity and change, and the integration of these. Since interpretation and transformation are both functions of education in the faith community, the task of education is to do each fully. The claim involves the denial of inverse relationship between continuity and change. The increase of one does not necessarily mean the decrease of the other. The claim is that the maximizing of continuity contributes to the maximizing of potential for change, when the integration of the two is also maximized. After all, the more a community knows and understands of its past, the more options it has to draw

¹¹Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith? p. 80.

from in its present transformations. Likewise, the maximizing of change contributes to the maximizing of potential for continuity when the integrative tasks are done well. When a community breaks an old pattern and changes its actions, it does so with a heightened sense of the historical tradition--the old pattern. Only when persons are confronted with novelty do they really become conscious of the traditional patterns out of which they live. At this point the change has heightened a sense of their continuity with the past, and the community has the option to choose the old or the new. Whichever choice is made at this point, it is made with consciousness of the other possibility. The apparent contradiction of this claim will be developed further below.

The third claim is that maximizing the potential both for continuity and for change requires methods which are both hermeneutical and transformative. This means that the educator interprets and enables others to interpret the historical Christian tradition, contemporary experience, and future hope. Hermeneutics functions as a bridge linking past and future to the immediate context in which we stand. The past experiences and future hopes actually enrich the present, providing more possibilities from which persons can draw in the choices of the present. The potential for change, then, is enhanced by one's continuity with

the past and one's hopes for the future. Change can even be prompted from that past experience or future hope, as well as from novelty in the immediate situation.

The fourth claim is that the traditioning task is most fully engaged when the elements of past, present, and future are brought into continually new syntheses. Note that the suggestion is not for a balance among these three foci, or even a dialectical relationship among them as Thomas Groome has suggested in his present dialectical hermeneutics.¹² Groome has called educators to heed the importance of keeping both the past and present in continuing dialogue, and he has further stressed the often ignored concern for the future. Similarly, Dwayne Huebner has urged educators to recognize human temporality and the impact of past and future on the present.¹³ The suggestion here is quite compatible with Groome and Huebner, but is pushing toward an additional emphasis. The suggestion here is that the past, present, and future stand not simply in dialectical relationship or in creative tension, but in an internal relationship in which they are continually mating in new syntheses--in new forms. The past and future not

¹²Groome, Christian Religious Education.

¹³Dwayne Huebner, "Curriculum as Concern for Man's Temporality," in William Pinar (ed.) Curriculum Theorizing (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975), pp. 237-249.

only stand in dialectical relationship with the present, but but they actually become part of the present. The past story, present context, and future hopes become part of the immediate experience so that the immediate experience actually incorporates them into itself.

This means that all these factors influence how we respond in the present and how we interpret the meaning of our life events. For example, the story of the prodigal son was told several hundred years ago, but a person may find that the story influences his or her response in a given situation and his or her interpretation of the meaning of the event. That parable actually becomes part of the present event and the person's interpretation of it. The parable stands as a critique of present action, yes, but it also shapes the present action in some way. The parable is an objective element of the past told in a particular time and place, and retold in other times and places. The parable also has a subjective involvement in the present. Education has a role in uncovering the meaning of that parable in other times and places through critical reflection on all available sources. This involves communicating and reflecting on the work of the scholars. Education also has a role in promoting persons' subjective engagement of the parable and their consciousness of its role in their thinking and doing. The task of the educator,

then, is to open gateways so that persons may cross over into the world of the gospel writer, hear the story, and be penetrated by it.

The fifth claim of the traditioning model of education is that the traditioning task takes place for persons in a particular time and place. The various texts are brought into focus for persons in a particular time and place through the process of hermeneutics. The texts are the different expressions of the community's past, present, and hoped for experience. They are not only the texts of the Bible or historical tradition, but also the texts of the contemporary world and of persons' hopes for the future. The texts include also the novelty which emerges through the work of God's spirit in the present moment. The interpretive process, then, is a bridge which links persons with what has gone before, the sociocultural factors in the present, the promises of the future, and the novelty which emerges from the uniqueness of the situation and from the mysterious workings of God. These come together. They are transformed by, and transformative of, the persons in this particular time and place. Thus, when persons act, their decision to act is influenced by their own past experience, by the context in which they live, by their own expectations of the future, and by God's action toward them. The decision, or act, which results will be the unique mating of all of these factors at a particular time and place in

history within a particular person or community. This mating, or synthesis, will be new and creative, but it will not be totally different from early syntheses, for these earlier unions are part of it. Though this new synthesis is creative and includes the past, it will not replace the past. New generations will need access not only to these new syntheses but also to those that have gone before. Just as in Biblical studies the discovery of an ancient manuscript sheds light on the later manuscripts, the contemporary process of "traditioning" does not replace the tradition of the past, but must continually rediscover it.

A sixth claim for the model is that Christian religious education is both personal and interactive, taking place as people enter into the lives of each other and into relationship with God and the world of past, present, and future. As noted in Chapter 4, the ability of a person or community to integrate continuity and change can be enhanced educationally. One important element in that is enhancing the interactive relationship that individuals have within themselves and with their environment. Persons are by nature related; they are internally related to God, to other persons, and to the world. These relationships become part of persons' experience and enter into their personal decision and transformation. The depth and richness of these relationships, then, is very important. This

calls for the kind of interpersonal educational ministry that is central for Paul Irwin,¹⁴ Martin Lang,¹⁵ and others.

Further interaction is what makes traditioning possible. Traditioning is an ongoing function of the Christian community, which means that it is a concrete task involving real persons and events. The fact that the task is influenced by past and present events and by future expectations suggests that traditioning involves interaction and synthesizing of these various influences. As persons interact with their own past, present, and future, and with those of others, interpretation and transformation are made possible. The greater the interaction, the more richness is possible in the interpretation, and the greater is the potential for transformation. This would suggest the traditioning task is one which requires a wealth of relating among persons, among cultures, and among epochs of history. Ross Snyder suggests that this kind of richness in relationships leads to interconsciousness, or the ability to meet another person

¹⁴Paul Irwin, The Care and Counseling of Youth in the Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). Irwin advocates a nurturing ministry to the whole person, and he calls this "personal ministry" (p. xiii).

¹⁵Martin A. Lang, "Faith as a Learned Life-Style," in Gloria Durka and Joanmarie Smith (eds.) Emerging Issues in Religious Education (New York: Paulist Press, 1976, pp. 69-75. Lang understands the most basic functional level of religious education to be faith-sharing, which is personal, one-to-one communication.

subject to subject. Essential to the traditioning task is this same kind of breadth and depth of experience. What is called for is experience which is both rich in interaction and deeply personal. This is much like Snyder's plea:

To be interesting (and to be profitably interpersonal), we must have gone places and had considerable feelings and ideas aroused, have interiorized interesting people until their aliveness sings in us, have at least one thing we do fairly well, one interest we really know something about, have mulled over our experiences and let our imagination create.

Without such richness, a person does not have materials with which to build inter-consciousness. Nor can he understand very well another's subjectivity.¹⁶

Another claim of the traditioning model of education is that, since education is personal and interactive, it can be significantly informed by developmental theory. One could say that the traditioning model stands on the shoulders of the developmental theories. The content, methods, and purposes of education need to be influenced in part by the psychosocial issues, the cognitive patterns, and the faith perspectives of the learners. Education must necessarily be guided by the development of those persons in whom the syntheses of past, present, and future, are forming. Christian education is not so concerned with creating syntheses and passing these down, as with making it possible for ever-new syntheses to be formed. This requires teachers to be aware of the learners--their issues, their modes of thinking, and their faith perspectives. Develop-

¹⁶Snyder, Young People, p. 53.

mental research and theory offers a wealth of insight into such questions. Teachers need to be deeply informed by those insights.

A related claim is that Christian religious education can be significantly informed by learning and instructional theory. Not only is the internal development of the learners a factor in the educational process, but also the external influences on their learning, the influences in their environment and the influences of the teacher.

Attention is given by learning theorists to the factors in the environment which lead to learning and change. Of particular interest here would be an understanding of factors in the environment which contribute to the acquisition of knowledge, or to change in belief, values, and action.

Instructional theorists have given particular attention to the effect of the teaching process on students' learning and behavior. Since the teacher, as well as the students, is a part of the educational process, the functioning of the teacher must be subject for study, and the educational process must be informed by results of such study. Alfred North Whitehead has suggested that teaching should follow the natural rhythms of learning through stages of romance, precision, and generalization.¹⁷

¹⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 15-28.

Students, then, would be introduced first to the glamor of a subject before moving into the more detailed and precise learning. Both of these precede the student's learning to generalize on the subject. Also concerned with instruction is the work of Jerome Bruner, who has done considerable research on the impact of different modes of presentation on learning¹⁸ which is enlightening to the educational process. James Michael Lee keeps this need for instructional theory in the forefront of discussion of Christian education and urges that some recognition of the teaching process must be kept in mind as well as of the learning process.¹⁹ The recognition of the importance of learning and instructional theories in the formulations of Christian religious education is a recognition that the shape of education is influenced by the teaching-learning process itself. The process of education influences the outcome.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRADITIONING MODEL

The traditioning model of education should have certain characteristics that reveal its dynamic character.

¹⁸Jerome Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction (New York: Norton, 1969), pp. 39-72.

¹⁹James Michael Lee, The Flow of Religious Instruction (Dayton, OH: Pflaum/Standard, 1973), pp. 39-57. Lee wants theories of teaching to be considered because they offer guidance as to how teachers can facilitate the learning process in others (p. 48).

The hope would be that the educational process would be marked by at least these four characteristics.

Dialogue

The traditioning model of education is by its nature dialogical--opening up dialogue between persons, between cultural groups, within persons, and so forth. In these interactions both hermeneutics and transformation take place.

Hermeneutics requires human communication through texts of various kinds and the interpretation of these texts. This requires transmission and reflection as discussed above. The reflection is really a dialogue between the interpreter and the text. This dialogue could take the forms discussed above of critical reflection or depth reflection. The dialogue could take the form, for example, of the interpreter's viewing a painting and proceeding with the question-asking and analysis of critical reflection. What was the intended purpose of this painting? What does it share in common with other paintings of the same artist of the same period? How would it have been viewed by persons of that period? What is its style and what were the artist's techniques? The dialogue may also take the form of depth reflection. How do I respond to this artistic expression? Why? How must I be like the persons for whom the painting was intended? What images are called up out

of my own experience?

Transformation, likewise, takes place through dialogue. Persons are actually formed in interaction with other persons and texts. How often does an encounter with another person or a particular story or film make a lasting impression or become part of our store of meanings without our even knowing it. Persons often recount the experience of recalling at some crucial moment a particular parable or psalm or experience with a friend. The interactions we have with texts and with persons become part of our selves, forming and transforming us, often in unexpected ways.

Curiosity and Creativity

Hopefully the education process will also be stimulating of curiosity and creativity. Hopefully persons will be inspired both to seek and to invent. This suggests that burning questions, exciting ideas, problems to be solved, new inventions, and dreams to be sought are all important ingredients in education.

In this task of stimulating curiosity and creativity, nothing can be more important than arousing questions. Lewis Sherrill describes the Jewish education of the first century B.C. and after. He notes that the emphasis in secondary education was placed both on persons' becoming thoroughly familiar with the Torah and the Mishnah and on

their learning to ask good questions and to probe and interpret Scriptures in light of contemporary knowledge.²⁰ Likewise Sherrill also notes the dynamic and questioning quality of the Hebrew education in the period prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The teaching was done in this period by parents, prophets, priests, sages, and poets.²¹ Two examples serve to illustrate the vitality of the education that resulted. First, the priests and prophets were not always in agreement in their primary emphases. The priests taught through the rituals of worship, focusing on how persons approach God and on Israel's position as God's chosen people. The prophets taught through the interpretation of inner illumination and ordinary experience. They focused on God's seeking out persons wherever they are and on God's purposes which go even beyond Israel. These different foci of the priests and prophets were inevitably in tension at times. Conflict was thus encouraged in the education of the ordinary persons and this was seen as part of the religious life.²² Likewise, questioning was aroused in the education which took place in the home. Not only were parents models and teachers of oral tradition and upholders of discipline (including the religious codes), but

²⁰ Lewis Sherrill, The Rise of Christian Education (New York: Macmillan, 1953), pp. 61-64.

²¹ Ibid., p. 6.

²² Ibid., pp. 14-16.

they also led certain religious rites in the family. In these roles the parents not only taught and led the ritual celebrations, but they also had to answer their children's questions about why we do this or believe that.²³ One can see that in both the larger community and in the home questioning and curiosity were built into the structure. Sherrill thought that the education which resulted exhibited both continuity and change. He called this "one of the rarest of combinations."²⁴ Through early education given in informal fashion within the family, it led to emotional stability in religion. But by constant stirring up of adult thought in regard to that same religion it not only encouraged stability, but it also compelled the growth of ideas within the religion.²⁵

Curiosity and creativity issue out of questioning, and also out of passion. One of Alfred North Whitehead's famous epithets is that "it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true."²⁶ He added, "The importance of truth is, that it adds to interest."²⁷ Certainly interest must issue from, and back into, the educational process. Winston Churchill described the dawning

²³Ibid., pp. 17-24.

²⁴Ibid., p. 6.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 6-7.

²⁶Alfred N. Whitehead, Process and Reality (rev. ed.; New York: Free Press, 1978), p. 259.

²⁷Ibid.

of his own desire for learning--a dawning that emerged in his twenties. One part of his story is particularly telling here:

Then there was history. I had always liked history at school. But there we were given only the dull-est, driest pemmicanized forms like The Student's Hume. Once I had a hundred pages of The Student's Hume as a holiday task. Quite unexpectedly, before I went back to school, my father set out to examine me upon it. The period was Charles I. He asked me about the Grand Remonstrance; what did I know about that? I said that in the end the Parliament beat the King and cut his head off. This seemed to me the grandest remonstrance imaginable. It was no good. "Here," said my father, is a grave parliamentary question affecting the whole structure of our constitutional history, lying near the centre of the task you have been set, and you do not in the slightest degree appreciate the issues involved." I was puzzled by his concern; I could not see at the time why it should matter so much. Now I wanted to know more about it.

So I resolved to read history, philosophy, economics, and things like that; and I wrote to my mother asking for such books as I had heard of on these topics.²⁸

Passion was aroused when the connections were suggested between a school assignment and the living experience of a people. Passion was aroused for Winston Churchill by his own impassioned father, and that led him into further study of history. This study would itself affect the course of history.

Awe and Hope

Not only will the education process be stimulating

²⁸Winston Churchill, "Examinations and Education at Bangalore," in Leslie M. Brown, Aims of Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970), p. 128.

of the curiosity and creativity of the students and teachers, but it will also point these persons beyond themselves. It will stimulate awe and hope--that is, a sense of wonder before these mysteries of life and a hopefulness for the future. This is a hope for the Kingdom of God, even when the signs of the times are dismal. This is not a naive belief that everything will always get bigger and better, or that human persons will not destroy the earth by war or by stripping away the earth's resources. This is, rather, an awareness of the transcendent quality of life--of God's presence in, under, and over creation and of creation's ever-new possibilities. This is the kind of faith that was Abraham's as God's promise of descendants was repeated again and again and still no heir appeared. The promised land was struck by famine and Abram and Sarai had to flee to Egypt. Even on their return to the land, the promised descendants seemed nowhere in their future. God was persistent in seeking them out, even when their actions were far from deserving. They raised questions, but still they kept hoping.

Philip Phenix urges that the dynamics of the education process include hope, creativity, awareness, faithful doubt, wonder, and reverence. He believes that all of these issue from the transcendent quality of human persons. These dynamics spark the motivation of persons to learn and create and question and risk, to open self to other

persons and other ideas, and to stand in gratefulness and awe before life with openness to new possibilities.²⁹

Phenix's dynamics closely resemble what is being suggested here as characteristics of the education process, particularly as we speak of awe and hope.

The encouragement of awe and hope is no more to be equated with optimism in human accomplishment than are Phenix's dynamics. In fact, Phenix is quite critical of hope rooted in finite structures or accomplishments. Phenix speaks of human consciousness as both finite and infinite by nature. He understands sin to be persons' escaping from the infinite by immersing themselves in the finite.³⁰

The denial of spirituality in the name of individual self-sufficiency or various forms of absolutism, of institution, race, class, nation, tradition, or doctrine, is evidence of this flight from transcendence.³¹

The infinite is not easily defined and coded, but we will venture here to name it. The infinite is that which goes beyond the limits of concrete reality. It is the transcendent quality of life which is marked by the self transcending self, the community transcending itself, and God's continuing promises and luring of creation into a new

²⁹Philip Phenix, "Transcendence and the Curriculum," in William Pinar (ed.) Curriculum Theorizing (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975), pp. 328-333.

³⁰Ibid., p. 328.

³¹Ibid.

future. Persons stand before the infinite, and one hopes that Christian religious education will stir their awareness of the "hoped for but not yet." One hopes that genuine awe and hope will be inspired.

Integrating of Thought and Feeling and Action

The debates among cognitive and affective and action-oriented education models have worn thin by now, but they continue. The mark of traditioning education is that persons are both formed and transformed in all of these dimensions of existence. The separation of thought from feeling and action are artificial anyway, in that change in any one will inevitably lead to change in the others. When one of these is separated out as the target of the educational process, all three suffer, including the one which is chosen as the target.

The integration of thought and feeling and action is inspired when education is designed with some attention to all three. When education is defined purely in terms of the quantity of knowledge taught or the expression of feelings or behavioral objectives, something is lost. The quality of knowledge taught tells us nothing about persons' own reactions to that knowledge and incorporation of it. The expression of feelings tells us nothing about the deeper transformations taking place in people which

are both rooted and reflected in knowledge and action. Behavioral objectives, focused on certain patterns of behavior, inevitably omit some patterns which may also be quite important. Further, behavioral objectives are limited to those transformations that can be observed and measured, ignoring, for the most part, the qualities of inner life which are often not accessible through behavioral measures.

The traditioning model of education is one built on serious consideration of all three dimensions--thought, feeling, and action. All three are nurtured, informed, and reflected upon. As these are continually integrated in the education process, persons are indeed transformed.

All of these claims and characteristics of the traditioning model of education remind us that persons do stand at the intersection with influences from all directions. The purpose of education is to facilitate persons' creative responding to all of these influences upon them. What is being called for is a traditioning process which opens up the worlds of past, present, and future, and evokes inspiration and courage to enter fully into a living tradition.

Chapter 6

REFORMULATION OF EDUCATION PRACTICE

What does Christian religious education look like in a traditioning model? We have noted that the traditioning model is one in which the starting point of education is the person or group in relation to God and the world of past, present, and future. The persons are not just Johnny, Maria, Bill, and Claudette who have certain needs, abilities and interests. They are also persons who are in relationship with God, with significant others, with a variety of social groups and cultural symbols, and with a physical environment.

Let us look at Johnny, Maria, Bill, and Claudette, for example. Johnny is a child who knows only one kind of lifestyle--whose parents are rearing him to take over the family business. They want very much for the school, church, and community to express and reinforce the values that they hold. Maria is a child whose parents have emigrated from Mexico and who feels much more comfortable with other persons from Mexico than with the variety of persons in this church behind her house. Bill is a child with a learning disability who is teased by the children in his neighborhood and who is basically ignored by the adults and children in the church. Claudette is a child

who is very confused about religion. Her father is Roman Catholic and her mother is Jewish. A neighbor has been bringing her to visit this Protestant church, but it does not make much sense to her. She does have an active prayer life. She speaks to God about her confusion, not daring to discuss it with anyone else.

The traditioning model of education calls attention to the need to be sensitive not only to the uniqueness of each of these people but to the way in which each one of them participates actively in the living stream of tradition. These children are not unusual. Most persons will be able to identify Marias and Bills in their own life experience. These Marias and Bills may have other names, or they may be adults instead of children. Each one is in relationship with God and the world. They are continually being acted upon, and they are continually acting and reacting. They are continually being transformed, and they are transforming. These interactions need to be the focal point of the education process, for this is where traditioning takes place.

In our group of four children the teacher's role may be primarily to create openings for these children to hear and see more of their own family traditions and the cultures from which these spring. The teacher's role may be to create openings into the sharing of these stories, the telling of stories from the historical Christian

tradition, and the telling of stories from contemporary cultures. The teacher's role may be to create opportunities for interpreting these stories in light of each other and in light of the Christian hope for the future. The teacher's role may be to create an environment which facilitates the children's reflections and synthesizing of these various stories so that the stories can enter fully into their own experience. The teacher's role may be, also, to facilitate culture-making out of the interactions of this group with each other and with the past and future that they explore. Culture-making is just another word for tradition-forming, and it takes place as persons create new relationships, new art forms, new music, new stories. These do not arise out of pure novelty, but out of the past, present, and future as they come together with novelty in the group of people who are creating.

AIMS: WHAT IS TO HAPPEN?

Though much concern has been raised in recent years about the total identification of education with goals and learning,¹ we cannot avoid these questions altogether. The very concept of education suggests that some person or

¹Huebner has been a particularly vocal spokesperson for this point of view. See: Dwayne Huebner, "Curriculum as Concern for Man's Temporality," in William Pinar (ed.) Curriculum Theorizing (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975), p. 244.

persons have goals for others. Whether we talk about inductive education which draws out the insights that are present within persons or deductive education which communicates insights to persons, we are referring to a process which has a goal, which involves learning in some form, and which involves an agent or facilitator or teacher.

The problems arise when goals are so ambiguous and vague as to mean nothing, when they are so specific and concrete as to point to nothing beyond themselves, when they are not harmonious with the educational methods, when they do not relate to the students' own goals in any way, or when they are taken to be the whole of the educational process, leaving no opening for the novel or the transcendent.

Exploring the aims of the traditioning model provides a way to describe the model and to see what hopes underlie it. The aims of education are what education points toward or leads to. The aims implied in the traditioning model grow out of the shared life of the group as it is enlarged and enriched by the individuals in the group and by the larger community of faith. Both the individuals and the larger community bring tradition and accumulated experience to the situation, and these inform the aims. This means that the aims are both internal and external. They come from within the group of Maria, Claudette, Bill,

Johnny, and their teacher. They also come from the congregation or parish where this group exists, and they come from the denomination or connectional church bodies which suggest what may be important in the educational process of this group.

This view of aims is radically different from that of John Dewey, R. S. Peters, and other empiricists who have given attention to the philosophy of education. Dewey and Peters both argue strongly against externally imposed aims in favor of aims that grow out of the immediate situation.² They would likely have no objection to much of what I say here, but the suggestion that some aims might come from persons and groups and ideas outside the immediate educational setting would likely raise some questions for them.

The view that nothing in education should be imposed from outside the group is a view which still has influence. It has led many to reject the idea of denominational curriculum altogether in favor of purely indiginized forms of education. The trend has been toward curriculum which is "homegrown" within one's own congregational or parish setting. Walter Vernon refers to this

²John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1926 (1916), p. 127; R. S. Peters, Ethics and Education (Atlanta: Scott, Foresman, 1967 (1966), p. 5.

trend as the "era of localism."³ But in the traditioning model the focus is on the educational group in relation to all these outside forces (congregation, connectional church, subcultures in the larger society, and so forth). The group is not isolated. Therefore, the education that takes place in this group cannot ignore the influences from without any more than it can ignore those from within.

At the same time, the aims of education must not be purely external; they need to be flexible and responsive to the situation. This means that the aims need to be open for ongoing revision. They need to be part of the educational process itself, related closely to the methods and always generating reformulations of aims and methods. In this emphasis the proposal here bears much in common with Dewey's understanding.

About Ideals, Goals, and Objectives

For several years a central emphasis in education has been on goals and objectives, with occasional mention of something more grandiose called ideals. So far in this chapter these terms have been avoided by keeping the

³Walter N. Vernon, "Curriculum Resources, Christian Nurture, and Changing Times," Perkins Journal, XXXII, 1 (Fall 1978), 8. This trend is evidenced within many Protestant denominations in the United States and Canada, e.g., the "Fishes and Loaves" curriculum program of the United Church of Canada.

discussion to aims. The concept of aims offers a generic word which describes what the education process points toward or leads to. That concept becomes more useful when we distinguish among different kinds of aims--objectives, goals, and ideals.⁴

Objectives are simple, concrete, and attainable aims. They are the most basic empirical ends which are aimed for and which lead then to the formation of new objectives. They are the particular hopes for particular situations. An objective for our group might be learning to sing a popular Mexican hymn.

Goals are general hopes which are really complex patterns of objectives valued by a person or a group. The objective of learning to sing the hymn in Spanish might be one small part of a goal that the whole group gain more understanding and appreciation for expressions of faith in different cultures, particularly in those most directly associated with the persons in the group. The goal in this case influences the objectives which are chosen, but the

⁴Leslie M. Brown (ed.) Aims of Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970), pp. ix-xix. Brown uses a similar delineation of these four concepts, but he understands goals to be distinctive by being private, rather than public. See particularly p. xvii. The delineation here is not meant to be perfectly consistent with Brown's, but marked similarities do exist. Similarities also exist with Rubin Gotesky's view put forth in that same volume. See particularly: Gotesky, "Means, Ends-in-View, Anticipations and Outcomes," pp. 170-173.

outcomes of the objectives may also lead to reformulation of the goal. The goal of "understanding and appreciation" is more general and less clearly measurable and attainable than the objective of learning the hymn. However, the goal points beyond the particular objective to the more general aims of the educational process. Though general, these goals need not be so vague as to be nondescript. They need to be always stated as clearly as possible and open to reexamination and change.

Ideals are the eschatological hopes of the Christian community--the hopes about ultimate things. These are really complex patterns of goals, and they are no more fixed than the objectives and goals. While they inform the choices and reformulation of goals and objectives, the ideals themselves are being transformed as persons and groups proceed in aiming at their objectives and goals and reflecting on the outcomes. The ideal of the unity of the Christian community may be underlying the objective and goal discussed above. The process of doing education, however, may unfold new objectives and goals and these may lead to reflection and revision of the ideal.

In our example, the teacher may find that teaching the Mexican hymn in Spanish does not lead to the intended goal because three of the children express anger about how hard this is to do. Maria feels embarrassed, then, rather than appreciated for her Hispanic culture. This "failure"

may lead to a revision of the educational objectives--perhaps a visit to a Spanish-speaking church or a visit from an Hispanic musical group. The educational goal may then be revised to include not only understanding and appreciation of faith expressions in various cultures, but also understanding of one's own resistances to faith expressions that seem foreign to one's own experience. The ideal may also be revised from the unity of all Christians to the unity of all Christians, even in their diversity. This kind of revision of objectives, goals, and ideals is, in fact, what many teachers do already with or without being conscious of it. The consciousness of the process can simply make it more helpful to one's work of deciding what to do and how to do it.

The boundaries among objectives, goals, and ideals may not always be clearcut. One objective, for example, may be related to two overlapping goals. The purpose of this delineation is simply to bring some coherence and usability to the concepts.

Ideals, Goals, and Objectives in the Traditioning Model

Now, what is the unique character of ideals, goals, and objectives in the traditioning model of Christian education? These cannot be defined in static terms lest they contradict the very nature of the model. The model does

suggest, however, something about the character of these aims.

Objectives. The objectives in this model would be synthesizing, transforming events. Surely an infinite variety of such events could emerge. The focus of these events would be on human integrations of their relationships with God and the world and on the creative decisions that enter into these integrations. The objectives then would be stated in terms of transforming events in which decision and integration were facilitated. For example, one objective might be that persons would discuss the similarities and differences in elections of leaders in the Biblical times of the Judges and Kings, in the Middle Ages, in the Reformation, and in the present time in their own country. Another objective might be that the persons examine their own priorities in terms of how they use their time during a typical week, and that they critique and revise these priorities in light of their vision of the Kingdom of God.

Goals. The goals in this model have been alluded to in Chapter 5. We barely scratched the surface there when we said that the goals would have to do with knowledge with understanding and transformation. These seem like very ordinary goals indeed, but the combination is not ordinary at all. Learning facts is often assumed to run

counter to understanding or insight and, even more so, to transformation. How many times do we hear "head knowledge" used pejoratively in favor of "understanding in the heart" (whatever that means). When a professor brings out lecture notes, students often moan at the possibility of a dull session irrelevant to their real concerns. And students of all ages often complain about didactic forms of education in the church. Theorists such as Paulo Freire criticize "banking" methods of education (which store up knowledge in students) as being alien to humanizing methods.⁵ And John Westerhoff calls for the discarding of the schooling/instructional paradigm in Christian education. He sees this paradigm as appropriate for teaching knowledge about religion, but not for producing faith.⁶

All of this is to say that the prevalent tendency in education is to separate knowledge, understanding, and transformation into independent, and often contradictory, aims of education. This tendency is not without merit, for knowledge which does not contribute to understanding and transformation can indeed be dehumanizing. Likewise, knowledge about religion can be empty without the transformation of persons' faith.

⁵ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp. 58f.

⁶ John H. Westerhoff, Will Our Children Have Faith? (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 22-23.

On the other hand, what kind of humanization and faith development can take place without the enrichment of persons with the knowledge of their own history and of cultures across the globe. This is not to suggest that the more knowledge persons have the more humanized and transformed they will be. This is to suggest that an increase in knowledge can increase the possibility of understanding and transformation. Knowledge with understanding and transformation, then, are not two separate and distinct goals of education. The goals of education in the traditioning model will have to do with these two interwoven in many patterns. Knowledge with understanding and transformation are so inextricably bound that they cannot be separated as aims of education. An increase in one inevitably increases the possibilities that the others will also increase.

One can see this relation in many events of ordinary experience. When persons gain a new understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, they are usually more eager to learn more facts about the two religions and their historical relationship. When persons visit Hawaii and understand something of the diversity of her people and the intermingling of cultures there, they often seek out facts about the different migrations of people to the islands and the characteristics of the various cultures that these people brought with them. When

people are transformed--when they change in their beliefs or actions--they usually pursue new knowledge and understanding with great curiosity. When they reject a particular idea about God, for example, they often actively seek new knowledge and understanding of God. When they experience some form of conversion, they often study eagerly for more knowledge and understanding of their change. Lewis Sherrill, for example, points to the transformation in life meaning that comes from encounter with the Bible.⁷ Likewise, an increase in understanding or transformation can increase the possibility of a person's acquiring new knowledge.

Ideals. Three ideas which are particularly suggested in this traditioning model of education are the ideal of keeping faith alive and open to transformation, the ideal of fostering relatedness with God and with human persons, and the ideal of pointing toward the Kingdom of God. These are not ideals which the community can optimistically hope to realize even through its best efforts. These are ideals, rather, that highlight the community's dependence on God and put communal efforts into a much larger perspective of God's work. Other ideals may also be closely related to these. These and others serve to

⁷ Lewis Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 188-189.

keep the community visioning and open to the future as well as subject to the judgment of inadequacy in light of the Big Hopes.

The tension between the empirical objectives and the visionary ideals is not new for the Jewish-Christian communities. These communities have historically lived between the call to concrete decision and action in everyday life and the call to an eschatological vision. Christian educators cannot expect to escape this tension. They cannot just vaguely state grandiose ideals to justify their work. Neither can they boil all of their work down to a handful of concrete and manageable objectives. The fact is that Maria, Johnny, Bill, and Claudette must be addressed in some real and concrete ways next week. That concrete address, however, is a participation in a living tradition which moves forward to some ultimate meaning.

CONTEXTS: WHERE DOES EDUCATION TAKE PLACE?

Much ado has been made over the settings or contexts of education in recent years. Some educators have chosen to multiply the number of possible settings so that the list grows with each new experiment.⁸ Others have chosen to eliminate the distinctions and speak of only one

⁸ The United Methodist Church, for example, has recently done an extensive study, elaborating the various settings of educational ministry.

broad context, e.g., the community of faith. In either case, optimism prevails. The resolution of the context is taken to be a central question (if not the central question for the reformulating of Christian religious education).

On the one hand, the attention to the educational context seems out of proportion to its importance. We hear John Westerhoff's convincing plea that the context needs to be shifted from the Sunday School to the community of faith.⁹ This shift is presented as a remedy to our present dilemma as if the problems accompanying the Sunday School would not exist if the Sunday School were eliminated and replaced by the community of faith. The rethinking of the context does indeed shake the foundations and lead to healthy critique of educational systems. It does, however, leave many unanswered questions, and many people in educational ministry are swimming in the wake, wondering what they should be doing. The context debate, as presently framed, leaves open the larger questions of the nature of the Christian community and the related questions of the function of education in that community. The goals and methods of Christian religious education are also left untouched. The changing of particular contexts, then, does not seem to be a panacea for all the ills of the church's education.

⁹Westerhoff, pp. 51f.

A case in point is the shift in many Protestant denominations from a Director or Minister of Education to a Director or Minister of Program. This is taking place with little consideration of what the word "program" suggests. Program is thought to be more comprehensive than education, and certainly it does suggest a reaching into all the settings of the church's ministry. The problem is that "program" may be more narrow in its connotations than education. The word program is suggestive of planned activities or events, with no reference to the function of those activities or events. Education may include such programs, but it may also include person to person dialogue, individual study and reflection, and any number of functions which do not fit neatly under the "program" umbrella. The word program emerges when we define education in terms of context, in this case, the program settings of the church. This context may be broader than what is often thought of as the context of education, but this shift leaves the question of the function of education in the community virtually untouched. The question of context is given top billing to the neglect of other questions.

On the other hand, the attention to the educational context seems to be underplayed. Perhaps we have not yet taken seriously what it would mean to reflect critically on the context of Christian religious education. Malcolm Warford suggests that the context is crucial, but he does

not suggest that a simple shift of educational settings will alleviate the education dilemmas. He calls instead for a radical critique of the whole church structure, including the structures of education.¹⁰ This would suggest that new contexts would emerge which could be more liberating than the present ones. Warford does not suggest, however, what those new structures might be. In fact, he sees the revision of the context as an ongoing process, which involves continuing examination and reformulation of the church's ethos.¹¹ This kind of reformulation is not done once and for all, but at particular times and places--at particular times in history and in particular churches or congregations.

Whatever else can be said of the context of Christian religious education, one can certainly recognize that it has emerged as a focal issue in contemporary discussions. Unfortunately the discussion has sometimes attended considerably more to what the particular contexts are than to the relationship of these particular contexts to the larger context of the Christian faith community or the educational functions.

¹⁰Malcolm L. Warford, The Necessary Illusion (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976), pp. 53-61.

¹¹Ibid., p. 61.

In a traditioning model of Christian religious education the broad context is taken to be the Christian faith community of past, present, and future with all of its beliefs and values and actions. That community has acted and been acted upon by God and the world, so that it is not a context isolated from others, but deeply penetrated by God and the world throughout history and in the present and future. The function of educational ministry is to engage persons in full participation in the living Christian tradition--in "traditioning." This includes engaging persons in dialogue with the past, present, and future of that tradition, and opening possibilities for the transformation of individuals and culture. This broad context of the Christian faith community and this traditioning function need to influence what the particular contexts, or settings, or educational ministry will be.

The particular contexts for Christian religious education are basically wherever persons are opened to their experience of God and the world of past, present, and future, and are transformed. This indeed broadens the context to all of life, but not without the qualification of "wherever." The contexts are very particular--families, fellowship groups, study classes, action groups, worship services, and so forth. The particular contexts may be different, however, in the twenty-first century from the twentieth. We need to continually examine the Christian

faith community with its history and its future and the educational function of traditioning, so that we can continually critique and revise our understanding of the particular contexts.

Rather than make a list of settings, we will here examine some qualifying descriptions of the context of Christian religious education. Four such descriptions are proposed.

Wherever Persons Seek to Be Related
to the Christian Tradition

Christian religious education takes place wherever persons wonder and where they are informed in their faith and related to the Christian tradition of past, present, and future. This includes all of those settings in which persons seek after meaning and in which they can be encouraged in their seeking and interpreting. These are the settings where disciplined study can be brought together with imaginative flights into a world of "once upon a time" or "I wish I may, I wish I might." These are the settings where students can learn what three different scholars have said about the story of the lost sheep and imagine what story they would tell to a group of pharisees today. These are the settings where the story of Martin Luther can be read and discussed in depth with careful deliberation on the social and historical dynamics of the

Reformation, and where students might study the dynamics of the contemporary social situation and ask what call for reform might be needed today. These are the settings where people dream dreams about the ideal world and where they study the promises of God and the eschatological visions given voice in the Bible and in the whole of Jewish-Christian history.

In short, the actions related to seeking and participating in the Christian story are at the heart of the teaching ministry of the church. Wherever these take place is an appropriate context for Christian religious education.

Wherever Persons Communicate Faith
with One Another

Flowing naturally from the first description of contexts is this second description which reminds us that wherever persons come together in fellowship, Christian religious education takes place. Fellowship is where faith communication takes place. The Biblical image of koinonia suggests a fellowship or sharing community in which persons share together in the mysteries and gifts of Christ and in which they share with each other in real and concrete ways. This kind of sharing is at the heart of faith communication--the giving and receiving.

This would suggest that contexts are those settings

where persons communicate faith with one another. These, in fact, are settings where tradition is shared--re-presented and re-formed. The contexts include those where people celebrate together the gifts of Christ in ritual and symbol--in the liturgy and sacraments, in art and music, and so forth. They include contexts in which persons give verbal witness to their faith--in teaching, preaching, and testimonies of various kinds. They include contexts in which faith is reflected in action--action in the church and in the world, action with significant others, and action with the larger structures of society. In short, contexts are numerous and varied--family celebrations of Advent, camping trips, art and drama groups, church school classes, worship services, action groups, fellowship groups, and so forth.

As people share themselves with each other, they actually communicate meaning through their language and gestures. If we recognize all the gatherings of the church as faith sharing events, then we see them all as the context of Christian religious education. In these gatherings, then, we can stir and encourage significant communication--whether it be jovial and light-hearted or heavy and serious.

Wherever Communion with God Is
Supported and Guided

If Christian religious education has to do with the

formation and transformation of persons' faith, then education takes place in any context where persons are supported and guided in their communion with God. This suggests that settings of worship and spiritual guidance are contexts of education, as are retreats of various kinds.

The dilemma posed by this kind of statement is that worship, then, is sometimes assumed to take the place of other contexts. The teaching ministry becomes characterized as one of the many dimensions of worship--wholly incorporated in this context. Instead I would suggest that in the ministry of liturgy--in bringing service to God--persons are indeed formed and transformed in their faith. Therefore, worship has educational dimensions in addition to its other dimensions.

Implicit in these statements is the assumption that education is not worship and worship is not education. Their respective functions are unique. To equate the two would be to deny the richness of one or both. Though the two are not the same, they do overlap so that each does exist in the other. Education takes place as we worship, and worship takes place as we teach, whether or not we plan for it in intentional ways.

Wherever People Carry on the
Mission of Christ

If Christian religious education has to do with the communication and interpretation of the Christian story and

the formation and transformation of persons' faith, then education takes place in any context where persons enter into that story and participate in the creating of new chapters. These are the contexts in which Johnny, Maria, Claudette, and Bill participate with others in the ministry in the church and in the world. The laity (laos) of the church are the people of God called to carry on the work of Christ in the world. The broader context of Christian religious education has been described above as the Christian faith community with all of its beliefs, values, and actions. Participation in that context suggests involvement in the action of that community. The community is an action committee, reaching out wherever persons or social structures have need. Participating in the living tradition of this community inevitably involves participation in this action.

This would suggest that education takes place wherever people participate in the ministries of visitation, music, consciousness-raising, caring for the sick, liberating the oppressed and oppressors, and so forth. The possibilities are unlimited, for persons learn and are transformed as they do these things. Education is not a passive process, but it takes place as persons actively engage in the world--acting, reflecting, and acting again.

Needless to say, these various descriptions of the context of Christian religious education flow together.

One cannot identify any particular context with only one of these descriptions. The interpersonal communication of faith is related to communion with God. Relating with the Christian tradition is tied to carrying on the mission of Christ. In any particular context of educational ministry, these will flow together in various ways. Christian religious education takes place wherever persons are opened to God and the world and are transformed.

TEACHING: HOW DO WE DO IT?

Here you are standing at the intersection with a group of people, and you are the teacher. What are you going to do? Some description was given in Chapter 5 of the methods of a traditioning model of education. Two principal methods were suggested--hermeneutics and transformation. Here we will try to describe in some concrete ways what shapes these might take in teaching.

The teacher is, first of all, acting in relationship to the students. They are all part of the journey of faith, and they meet at the intersection. This is true whether they meet in a classroom or service of worship or retreat or work project. This is true in settings where persons are formally identified as teachers and students and where they are not. The teaching must be relevant to these persons as they meet each other and God and the world of past, present, and future. The teaching must also

be appropriate and relevant to the aims and contexts of educational ministry. We need to keep in mind the aim of enabling persons to participate in the living Christian tradition. We need to keep in mind the context of the Christian faith community with its past, present, and future and with all of its beliefs, values, and actions. If educational methods are separated out from these people and this aim and context, they become technological tools rather than meaningful functions in the community. Then Maria, Johnny, Bill, and Claudette are pushed through a meaningless system rather than educated.

Teaching in Relation to Persons at the Intersection

To teach in relation to persons at the intersection is to be aware of the issues, feelings, needs, dreams, and capabilities of those persons. One must be aware, for example, of the differences in the degree and types of motivation, or the emotional blocks which people bring to the intersection. One must also be aware of the different influences upon persons from outside themselves. For example, are persons surrounded by Biblical literalism or poverty or wealth or political turmoil? All of these will influence their perspectives, questions, and self-identity. This may suggest the need for different forms of educational ministry for different persons.

Individual differences will also exist in the openness of persons to change. This is particularly important to note in light of the concern in this dissertation for education which maximizes both continuity and change. Some people are very resistant to anything that seems traditional. When someone asks them to discuss a modernized phrase like "God's ever-present creative love," they are eager to begin, but if the teacher then asks them to study the Apostles or Nicene Creeds, they seek ways to avoid it. They may say, "This doesn't make sense" or "This doesn't bear any resemblance to the first, modernized phrase." They may even argue that the creeds are outmoded, irrelevant, or meaningless. This suggests that teaching which facilitates both continuity and change must capture the imagination of these people so that they can find excitement and meaning in exploring the tradition. This could be through: (1) story-telling; (2) recreation of historical persons and events through stories, simulations, drama, art; or (3) tracing one theme through history, noting the continuities and changes in the idea through time.

On the other hand, some people are very resistant to anything that creates change. When someone proposes a new way of interpreting a scriptural passage or a new plan for the church program, they reject it immediately in favor of "tradition" (that is, the tradition that they

know). These people may not be particularly interested in ancient tradition, but they may be committed to preserving the one they have experienced or have learned in school (the one they have mastered). Teaching which facilitates both continuity and change must help these people to envision beyond their own experience of tradition. It must stimulate their curiosity and their ability to risk exploring new ideas. It must help them become sensitive to their own experience and that of others, and it must help them explore the richness of the tradition. This calls for offering opportunities to persons to: (1) express their own ideas, wishes, and feelings; (2) develop listening skills and experience other points of view through role plays, simulations, and so forth (as in Mead's "taking the role of the other"); (3) imagine new possibilities of beliefs and actions for the future; (4) restate familiar tradition in new words, paraphrases, and artistic forms; and (5) look at their own actions and test them against historical tradition and future promise (as in Groome's shared praxis model).

Teaching in Relation to the Aim of Traditioning

If the primary aim in the traditioning model is to enable persons to participate in the living Christian tradition, then teaching must help persons touch the meanings

in their own lives and in different aspects of the tradition. Teaching must help persons make the connections and bring these to bear on their decision at the intersection.

This calls for transmitting a rich story heritage and encouraging both critical and depth reflection on that heritage. This also calls for helping persons see ways in which they are presently helping to form and transform the tradition. Bill, Maria, Claudette, and Johnny may need explanations of how the current beliefs, practices, and values in their church came to be. What influences within and outside the church, historical and contemporary, contributed to these beliefs, practices, and values? They may also need to become more conscious of their own contributions to that tradition by expressing and sharing their ideas with others in the community through music or drama or discussion.

Teaching in Relation to the Context of the Christian Faith Community

We have noted that the context of education is the Christian faith community. This faith community is itself a synthesis of its past, present, and future. These come together to make the community what it is, and they are expressed through the various beliefs, actions, and values. The teacher needs to address persons in that community where they are. The teaching needs also to help

persons learn about, reflect on, and transform that faith community in which they participate.

This underlines the importance of the teacher's communicating in the significant symbols of the particular community in which he or she is teaching. This may mean inviting science fiction enthusiasts to create an outer-space version of the Abraham story, taking place in the year 2050. This may mean that the teacher be immersed in the events and language of football or medicine or industry and be able to draw on these for illustrations and to reflect on them with seriousness. Even more important, however, this means that the teacher must understand the language of the persons he or she teaches. This is for the purpose of understanding and being understood. Paulo Freire understands language to be the way in which persons refer to reality; therefore, teachers must be able to understand the language of the persons they address if they are to understand their world and speak language that is understandable to them.¹²

Equally important for teaching is the ability to communicate in the symbols which are, or have been, significant in Christian communities in other times or places. These are also part of the context. The avenues into discovering these symbols are vast--film, books,

¹²Freire, pp. 84f.

visits to different communities, and so forth. What is important is that the teacher immerse himself or herself into these symbols so as to sense some of their significance for the communities that hear them. These can be communicated in many ways, but however the communication is done, the teacher can help people relate to these other communities by suggesting connections between their own significant symbols and those symbols of the other communities. For example, the architecture of a church's sanctuary is usually intentionally designed to give expression to some dimension(s) of faith. Teaching might involve introducing and explaining some different architectural designs and asking persons to reflect on the meaning of the design of their own church's sanctuary in light of what they have learned. Or, teaching may begin with visiting several different churches and working together with students in trying to discover the meanings of symbols discovered there.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter began with the question, "What does Christian religious education look like in the traditional model?" The answer is that it looks many different ways. No magical formulae exist for perfect education every time. Education is itself a process in which teachers and students participate together in the living

tradition. They are pointed toward their future as they learn from their past and present. They are living together through a series of synthesizing, transforming events, none of which is an end in itself, but all of which point toward God's Kingdom.

The educational process does point to certain ideals that pull the persons forward and guide the educational process. These are the ideals of keeping faith alive and open to transformation, fostering relatedness with God and human persons, and pointing toward the Kingdom of God. Also, guiding the educational process is the context itself--the faith community which relates to God and the world, which bears the tradition, and which lives toward future. Within this community persons are formed and transformed in their faith, and the community itself is transformed. Education, then, takes place wherever persons are opened to their experience of God and the world of past, present, and future, and are transformed.

Teaching is meeting students at the intersection and moving with them in the direction of these ideals. All of this takes place within a context which is an historical community. What do we ask of a teacher then? We ask the teacher to meet students where they are and to relate to them in significant ways. We ask the teacher to participate and enable others to participate in the living Christian tradition with all that means. And we

ask the teacher to understand as deeply as possible and to help others to understand the context in which they are all living.

Chapter 7

CURRICULUM: WHAT ARE OUR GUIDES?

By this time the intersection must seem like a very awesome place. The question inevitably arises, "What are our guides?" This is the dilemma facing anyone who would teach. This is the very dilemma that leads to the great emphasis on printed curriculum.

As with context, many people are very optimistic about the possibility of resolving educational problems through curricular revisions or changes in curricular structures. Church teachers and leaders seek out a curriculum which is different from their church's offerings in hopes of revitalizing their own teaching. Publishers seek to make their own curriculum more available, more usable, and more attractive. Educational leaders seek to train persons in the choosing and using of curriculum resources. A great deal of energy goes into the revitalization of curriculum resources at all levels of the church.

This energy reflects the optimism held by many persons that solving our curriculum problems will solve our educational problems. Much optimism is expressed that including "more Bible" in the curriculum or offering several curriculum choices with different emphases will resolve current dilemmas. Others express pessimism in these

kinds of solutions and push for eliminating denominational or centralized curriculum altogether in favor of developing "homegrown" curriculum. We noted this trend in Chapter 6. It is reflected in the large number of local parishes writing their own curriculum. Persons in these churches are optimistic that homegrown curriculum is the hope for the future of education.

So here we stand optimistic that an appropriate roadmap must exist and yet uncertain about where to find it. This roadmap imagery has often been used to describe curriculum. The roadmap serves as a guide offered by an expert to a person unfamiliar with the territory. We fail to realize, even in this imagery, that a roadmap is of little use without a person who is searching for something, who has some ability to read maps, and who has some idea of where he or she is presently standing. We often assume that teachers are indeed searching, and we proceed to put the map in their hands. Sometimes we do go a step farther and give a few lessons in map-reading (called "curriculum utilization."). If we are really astute, we even give a lesson or two in finding one's place on the map (called "needs assessment"). We rarely take time to ask the teacher about his or her search, or to ask the students about their search. We simply assume that the map has answers to all the questions that might be asked, so we skip these steps.

RECONCEPTUALIZING ON CURRICULUM

In this era when so many educators seek the solution to educational problems in revising, reforming, or throwing out printed curriculum, we must spend some time studying deeply this issue and reconceptualizing it. In congregations or parishes, curriculum discussions often become the focal point for discussions of educational reform, and printed curriculum is often blamed for all the ills, or sought as the resolution to those ills. Teachers often attribute great power to curriculum, and such a powerful force certainly deserves considerable attention in our rethinking of education.

Both Maxine Greene and William Pinar have worked at reconceptualizing curriculum. They have called the roadmap view of curriculum into question. They criticize particularly the failure of such curriculum models to address the internal dimensions of the persons involved.

Maxine Greene has called attention to the estrangement of the student from the curriculum when it is not related to the student's inner structures of meaning. She recognizes the rapidly changing social world in which "the contemporary learner is more likely than his predecessors to experience moments of strangeness, moments when the recipes he has inherited for the solution of

typical problems no longer seem to work."¹ She compares this strangeness with what a stranger experiences when searching a map.² Translated into the context of Christian religious education, this stranger issue calls up a picture of a person standing baffled before all the knowledge that people "out there" somewhere think he or she should know. All the pressures pour down upon this person to know more Bible, to understand the relation between God and evil, to choose an ethical response to world hunger, and so forth. All of these agenda are zealously put forward, and this person stands in the intersection a stranger

Maxine Greene sees the great need in curriculum to be one of "making connections."³ She sees people as desiring to get oriented, or to "constitute meanings." This happens only as they see themselves as actors on the world rather than aliens, and only as they enter their own interior journeys.⁴ Any aloofness from the world or estrangement from self only perpetuates the student's estrangement as he or she stands holding a foreign map.

A similar point is made by William Pinar, who is

¹Maxine Green, "Curriculum and Consciousness," in William Pinar (ed.) Curriculum Theorizing (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975), p. 307.

²Ibid., p. 308.

³Ibid., p. 311.

⁴Ibid., pp. 313-314.

concerned that curriculum offer more than an external guide for a journey, however well-designed and appropriate to the students that guide may be. He urges that curriculum needs to focus on the travellers' experience of the journey as well.⁵ This means encouraging students to explore how they experience the journey--the new information or events. In order to do this with students, teachers must become students of themselves.⁶ As teachers become more aware of their own experience of the journey, they can better teach others on their journeys. To teach is to travel with, or to study with, students "with wise companionship."⁷

These kinds of arguments can be used as reasons for discarding printed curriculum resources, but they can also be used to spark a new kind of study of curriculum and a new kind of design. They can, for example, spark curriculum design that itself is open. Curriculum can be designed which encourages persons to look into themselves, to reflect with imagination and free association, and to recognize themselves as subjects in relation to the world presented. Curriculum, then, ceases to represent an external body of knowledge from someone or somewhere else that needs to be appropriated. It represents, instead, an opportunity to enter into knowledge, respond to it, act on

⁵William Pinar, "Currere: Toward Reconceptualization," in his Curriculum Theorizing, pp. 398-399.

⁶Ibid., p. 412.

⁷Ibid.

it. In short, the curriculum designed in this way offers the opportunity to experience world and to form world.

In Christian religious education, then, curriculum can be envisioned which offers persons the opportunity to learn about traditions so that they might enter into the experience of others who created and lived them. It can encourage persons to look inward to their own experience of these traditions and to enter actively the traditioning process--forming and transforming tradition.

The Shape of the Problem

All of this suggests a reframing of the curriculum issue. In the churches we have often sought to overcome the estrangement of curriculum by giving people what they say they want or by discarding curriculum resources altogether. This first alternative is dominant in the current curriculum system. Pressure groups and educational leaders in parishes put forth their wishes about the style and content of curriculum, and publishers set up marketing research to find out what people want. All of this input goes into the system. Then subject matter and curricular styles are discussed in committees where compromise becomes the order of the day. Out of these committees come choices to offer two or three or four lines of curriculum, one for each interest group. Out of these committees come choices to offer several different units, each reflecting

a concern of one of these groups. Out of these committees come decisions to choose writers who represent different perspectives and different interest groups as well. In short, the effort is made to make the curriculum less estranged by including something in it for everyone. If you as a teacher find yourself a stranger to the offerings this quarter, just muddle through and wait until next quarter when your own interests may be better represented. Or you may, instead, choose one of the other curricular options more suited to your interests.

The other alternative for curriculum reform is to discard the centralized curriculum as hopelessly estranged from the local situation. This approach is gaining wide appeal in both Christian and Jewish communities.⁸ This often leads people to search through local bookstores for printed resources that are appealing to their personal preferences, and this alleviates much of the estrangement problem. It introduces, however, another kind of problem--a privatistic approach to teaching. People teach what is

⁸Zisenwine identifies deterministic, centralized curriculum as a dominant problem in Jewish curriculum. He thinks this problem has given rise to experimentation and that new models are needed. See: David Zisenwine, "Jewish Education--An Opportunity Model," Religious Education, LXXV, 5 (September-October 1980), 558-560.

Osterman identifies the present period in Protestant curriculum development as "Babel II," which is characterized by movement away from centralized planning toward selectivity and grass roots curriculum. See: Mary Jo

appealing to them or what they think will be appealing to their students. They ignore those signals from outside that do not suit them. They choose a map that guides them through territory which is already somewhat familiar. The unfamiliar territory goes unexplored.

Another way in which churches fill the gap when centralized curriculum is discarded is to create their own curriculum. This often leads to very creative homegrown curriculum designed with a particular parish or congregation in mind. The attempt is made here to let the curriculum grow out of the life of the parish, and, when successful, this can go a very long way toward eliminating the estrangement problem.

The danger of this approach is that the curriculum may simply reflect and perpetuate the parish as it is, often not drawing in outside knowledge and perspectives and not pushing the parish to critique and transcend itself. Unfortunately, however, homegrown curriculum often does not even reflect the parish in any significant way. The curriculum is often designed by one or two persons in the church who may have no more awareness of the deep, inner searchings of the people in their parishes than the curriculum writers across the country (who do, in fact,

Osterman, "The Two Hundred Year Struggle for Protestant Religious Education Curriculum Theory," Religious Education, LXXV, 5 (September-October 1980), 530, 530n, 537.

have some relatedness and sensitivity to the persons for whom they write). Further, they may not be willing or able to design curriculum responsive to these inner searchings or to the social dynamics and issues in the community. What often happens in homegrown curricula is a shallow skimming across subject matter, reflecting little depth of theological study or reflection and, often, even little depth of reflection on the persons of the parish. This is not because the homegrown curriculum designers are incompetent--quite to the contrary. This is because the system giving rise to homegrown curriculum resources has the same flaws as the system giving rise to centralized curriculum resources.

Disconnectedness in the Curriculum System

Both of these systems are marked frequently by compartmentalization, which works against integration. This leads to a kind of disconnectedness in which subject matter is isolated from the educational method, curricular themes are isolated from each other, and curriculum-makers are isolated from curriculum-users.

Note how easily subject matter and method can be separated--the first kind of disconnectedness. A corporate body sponsors a consultation on curriculum design. They invite a systematic theologian to present the theological

content that needs to be included. They invite a religious educator to present educational methods. They then ask curriculum-makers to do their work, using those methods to communicate that content. Similarly, a local church invites a theologian to give theological input to teachers on a particular subject. An educator is then asked to develop curriculum resources (activities) for the same teachers on the same subject. The theologian and educator are not asked to work together in any way, nor to consult with the teachers about what is going on in their respective settings. The theological input is given one day and copies of the curriculum resources are distributed. Then the teachers are asked to proceed from there. This kind of approach is intended to bring theological insight and educational method together. Instead, it promotes compartmentalization and discourages the possibilities of integrations occurring when the various groups actually deal with the chosen subject. The theological input is taken to be the subject matter which can be prepared independently of the method (curriculum activities) and of the persons involved (teachers and students). Each of these three--subject matter, method, and persons--are seen to be independent and external to others.

A second kind of disconnectedness characterizes the organization of curricular themes. The old issue between "bible-centered" and "life-centered" themes gets

resolved by providing for both separately. The two approaches are offered in two different curriculum lines or in two different units. Hence, we may deal with both kinds of themes, but not together in any integrative fashion. This reinforces the isolation of past from present and future, for we provide resources for dealing with each separately rather than together. We study Abraham, for example, for example, and then later in the year, we study what it means to be the people of God today.

Barry Holtz recognizes this same kind of compartmentalization of curricular themes as a key problem in Jewish education. He begins by recognizing that Jews in this country live pulled between two cultures, and that education has only perpetuated the split.

Throughout history Jews have lived in a kind of creative tension with their environment--influenced by and just as surely influencing the thought of others. . . . And yet it seems to me that our Jewish schools tend to reenforce the bifurcation of cultures far more than they try to meet the challenge of integration. Instead of trying to place Jewish thought and experience in its larger context, we Jews isolate it and treat it as a kind of peculiar, hothouse flower of a culture, existing in its own hermetically sealed environment. In doing so we pass up a marvelous opportunity.⁹

Holtz is concerned that Jewish studies become isolated in the curriculum from everything else and, then, are seen as

⁹Barry W. Holtz, "Towards an Integrated Curriculum for the Jewish School," Religious Education, XXV, 5 (September-October 1980), 546-547.

a set-apart world of reality. One of the answers to this dilemma which he puts forth is an integrative curriculum in which the Jewish and non-Jewish thought would be studied together on a particular theme, such as death or evil.¹⁰

.The third prevalent form of disconnectedness is the isolation of curriculum-maker from curriculum-user. By this I do not simply refer to the problem of writers' not knowing personally the people for whom they write. Whether designing centralized curriculum or curriculum for one's own parish, the curriculum-maker may not be given access or even encouragement to be involved in the lives of the people for whom the curriculum is intended. Neither may the curriculum-maker be encouraged to design curriculum which creates paths for the curriculum-users into their own life experience. The curriculum resources often, then, seem irrelevant to the lives of the people who use them--isolated from the life of the church and world which these people experience.

This last issue is not a new one. Wide recognition is now given to the importance of considering together material resources and the human context in which they will be used. This is a recurrent theme in the 1980 issue of Religious Education devoted to "Curriculum in Religious

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 549-550.

Education."¹¹ Much stress in recent years has been placed on relating teachers to the curriculum by training them to choose and use curriculum resources and by recognizing the teachers and learners as part of the curriculum process. Mary Boys also calls attention to the social relationships (such as the political dimensions) of the curriculum process and the broadening of the contexts of curriculum issues to include all areas of the church's ministry where educational components exist.¹² The human context of the curriculum process is, thus, very complex. It includes the political decision-making process, the cultural and personal dimensions of the parish, the teachers and students in classrooms, and the people engaged in all facets of the ministry of the church. How can curriculum designing and resource be done in relation to these human contexts? That is the question.

CURRICULUM IN THE TRADITIONING MODEL

What is curriculum then, and how is it to be designed? Curriculum is simply a planned course. This simple

¹¹See particularly: Mary Boys, "Curriculum Thinking from a Roman Catholic Perspective," Religious Education, LXXV, 5 (September-October 1980), 522-523; William L. Roberts, "From Curriculum Research to Foundational Theorizing," Religious Education, LXXV, 5 (September-October 1980), 514-515; and Zisenwine, p. 559.

¹²Boys, pp. 518, 519, 523-524, 527.

definition is suggestive of a pathway (course) on a journey over which persons travel. The curriculum in Christian religious education is a particular kind of course--a pathway on a journey of faith.

Purpose

The curriculum exists in order to provide guidance to persons on their faith journeys. If we push the map metaphor referred to earlier we might recognize that a map does just that--it is a tool which provides guidance on a journey. A map, however, is only a tool, and it is static. It does not change as the landscapes change nor as our perspectives on those landscapes change. One need only to study ancient and modern maps to see the vast amount of change that does occur in both the landscapes themselves and in human perceptions of those landscapes. Geography changes daily as the earth is affected by the events of nature and the acts of persons upon nature. Volcanoes, earthquakes, and powerful wind and rivers leave their marks. So do people. A small mountain near our home has been almost totally eliminated in the last twenty years of mining. The map, then, is subject to constant revision. Furthermore, the map alone is not helpful without the elements described above--a person who is searching for something, who has the ability to read maps, and who has some idea of where he or she is presently standing.

This metaphor of the map needs to be enlarged, then, to include the travelers themselves, the guidebook, the travel plans, and the guide who is the "wise companion."¹³ This image of curriculum has been described by Herbert Kliebard as a metaphor of travel.

The curriculum is a route over which students will travel under the leadership of an experienced guide and companion. Each traveller will be affected differently by the journey since its effect is at least as much a function of the predilections, intelligence, interests, and intent of the traveller as it is of the contours of the route. This variability is not only inevitable, but wondrous and desirable. Therefore, no effort is made to anticipate the exact nature of the effect on the traveller; but a great effort is made to plot the route so that the journey will be as rich, as fascinating, and as memorable as possible.¹⁴

Note that Kliebard recognizes in this metaphor the roles of teacher, traveler (who is both influenced by and influencing the journey), and planned course. This image is responsive to the concerns of Greene and Pinar that persons' experience of the journey be recognized as part of the curriculum.

Content

This metaphor of travel is illuminating, but what kind of journey are we talking about? Will just any old

¹³The image of wise companion is suggested by both Pinar, p. 412, and Herbert Kliebard, "Metaphorical Roots of Curriculum Design," in Pinar, p. 85.

¹⁴Kliebard, p. 85.

journey do? If so, then Christian religious education has as its curriculum all the journeys of life, complete with teachers, travelers, and planned courses. This does not yet define the boundaries of curriculum, nor explain what is uniquely Christian about this education, however.

The content of the curriculum in the traditioning model is the accumulating wisdom of the Christian community. This includes the community's tradition, which is ongoing, and its accumulating experience, which is past, present, and future. This includes its experience of itself, of God, and of the world. The accumulating wisdom of the Christian community, then, is not an in-group wisdom which is isolated from the world, but a wisdom which grows out of the community's life in the world. Grasping the community's wisdom requires grasping the context--the world--in which that wisdom emerged and continues to emerge.

This definition of the content of curriculum is partly influenced by Lawrence Cremin's attempt to recapture William Torrey Harris's definition of curriculum as the "accumulated wisdom of the race."¹⁵ The difference lies in the fact that Harris's idea of curriculum (formed in the 1870s) rests on an assumption of preformed static

¹⁵ Lawrence A. Cremin, "Curriculum Making in the United States," in Pinar, pp. 30-31.

content which is passed on to students. He refers to accumulated wisdom. In fact, Harris's understanding of education has to do with a process of enabling persons to "become privy to the accumulated wisdom of the race."¹⁶ This certainly suggests an understanding of education and curriculum that is centered on the historical tradition. Cremin, however, recognizes the dynamic elements in Harris's understanding of curriculum.

What if we were to go back to Harris's definition of education and consider the curriculum as the accumulated wisdom of the race, to be made available to individuals through a variety of institutions in a variety of modes? And what if we were to conceive of education as the effort to define that wisdom in the large and then assist individuals in the business of sharing it more comprehensively, more economically, more self-consciously, and more critically?¹⁷

This return to Harris's definition suggests that curriculum is at home in a variety of contexts. The human context of the curriculum is understood broadly, inclusive of all of those settings in which education is an element. This also suggests that education has a two-fold role in relation to curriculum--to define the wisdom and to plan for the sharing of it. All of this is consistent with a traditioning model of education if we recognize a third role for education in relation to curriculum, i.e., to contribute new wisdom to the old. This suggests that the ongoing experience of the community contributes to the tradition and

¹⁶Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 30-31.

becomes part of the community's wisdom.

We can speak, then, of the accumulating wisdom of the Christian community, recognizing the dynamic nature of the wisdom. It emerges from and builds on the past, but it is transformed in the present as that community lives in the contemporary world and looks toward the promises of God's future.

Starting Point

The starting point of curriculum in the traditioning model are persons in relation to God and the world of past, present, and future. This suggestion moves beyond the educational debate between beginning educational events with life experience or with Bible. It moves beyond the systematic theological debate between beginning theological reflection with human experience or with historical tradition. The argument here is that we must begin with both--that the relationship is our starting point.

If this is the starting point, then the units of curriculum are those transforming events in which people are confronted by God and the world. People are not passive objects of these events, but they bring their own creative decision to them. Out of their decisions come new insights and actions toward God and the world. These are added to the others, thereby adding to the wisdom of the faith community. So persons stand at the intersection

--confronted by God and the world and the tradition of the Christian faith community (with its past and present and "hoped for" forms). These persons will decide how to bring these together, and their new insights and actions will guide them and others in the next steps of the journey.

Components

What, then, are the components of the curriculum in a traditioning model? The components are the persons who are teachers and students, the subject matter, and the design and resources for bringing that subject matter and those persons into dialogue.

Persons. The persons are those who travel the journey together. The teacher is a traveling companion who acts as guide. This does not mean that the teacher controls the situation, but that he or she is a wise companion. The teacher shares himself or herself with those on the journey and opens avenues for fellow travelers to share with each other and to explore that accumulating wisdom which is the tradition of the Christian community.

Referring back to the methods discussed in Chapter 5, the teacher is one who facilitates hermeneutics and transformation--who transmits, reflects, and opens channels for transformation. The teacher is one who does all of these things and enables others to do the same. So the fellow travelers on the journey are together telling

stories, reflecting on those stories, and transforming and being transformed. The curriculum is actually created and recreated as these travelers enter into the course of study with their own uniqueness as human beings.

Subject matter. The subject matter is also a component of the curriculum. Much attention has been given in recent years to the students and teacher as persons and to the curriculum design and resources. Very little attention, comparatively, has been given to the subject matter. Curriculum resources are often filled with suggestions about age level characteristics and about suggested activities, but the subject matter is often provided in its barest form. In a traditioning model of education the subject matter, or accumulating wisdom, becomes very important because this is the tradition which bears God's gifts to humanity. God has handed over the Tradition, and people continue handing on God's gifts through their telling and reforming of the tradition. This is the unending process of traditioning. Persons cannot engage in the passing on or the recreating if they are not involved in the subject matter--the accumulating wisdom of the Christian faith community.

If the subject matter is a component of curriculum, the curriculum resources need to make available that subject matter as well as be informed by it in method, style, and so forth. The teacher's guide, when there is

one, needs to offer subject matter content to assist the teacher in his or her own seeking. This calls for more content than the bare essentials that might be communicated with students. This calls for something more than a simplified wording of a Biblical story which can be told or read. In other words, curriculum resources need to be accompanied by background material as well as presentation material. Further, these guides need to offer questions that help teachers reflect on the ongoing life of their respective communities as they prepare to teach. We noted above that this ongoing life is also part of the subject matter.

The subject matter is not only important for the teacher in preparation, but also, for the students. Presentation materials need to be rich--not preshrunk and washed clean of all color. This is not an argument for complex confusion in curriculum resources but for richness. How are people to understand the grace of God, for example, if they only hear the heroic stories of God's chosen leaders--Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, Saul and David? How are we to grasp the wonder of God's love unless we recognize how God continued to seek out and used these people even when they lied, cheated and stole? These parts of the story make it more complex and make it deserving at times of an "R" rating, but without the complexity of Abraham and Sarah pretending to be brother and

sister in Egypt or Jacob tricking Esau out of his birth-right, the story is a dry chronology with little sense of reality about it.

The subject matter is not, like a block of wood, finished and stable. The subject matter itself is transformed as persons encounter it. These two curriculum components (the persons and subject matter) are already intertwined, even before you talk about design and resources. Persons are impacted by the accumulating wisdom in different ways, and also, the wisdom itself continues to build and change as people enter into it and it is transformed.

Design. In addition to the persons and subject matter the curriculum also includes the components of design and resources. This point is not likely to be met with surprise, as we usually begin here. These components are what we most often associate with curriculum, so now, finally, we are on very familiar ground. What do design and resources look like in a traditioning model of education?

Design is simply the environmental design which facilitates traditioning--which enables persons to participate fully in the living tradition, or the community's accumulated and emerging wisdom. This suggests that design needs to include a comprehensive plan for communicating

and interpreting the historical tradition (including both the Bible and the church's history). This also suggests that the design needs to include a comprehensive plan for helping people get in touch with their own experience and with others' experience. This kind of comprehensive planning is a way of creating an environment which encourages traditioning. To say that curriculum design is environmental design is to recognize that the environment actively influences persons at the same time that persons are actively influencing it. Designing the environment involves providing contexts and methods which will facilitate this influence in both directions. This is not an effort at engineering a perfect environment, but an effort at creating a culture out of the past and into the future. This is an effort at co-creating with God and with other people.

We have argued above that curriculum includes all the experiences that contribute to the formation of persons, as well as the formal courses of study. Both dimensions, then, need to be included in the design. Lawrence Cremin has noted the tendency in general education to pull between these two--i.e., to recognize the various domains in which education takes place, but to ignore all but one (usually the school).¹⁸ The same thing happens in Christian religious education, where persons like James Michael Lee focus

¹⁸Ibid., p. 30.

primarily on the schooling contexts and John Westerhoff, on worship and community life contexts. A curriculum design really needs to embody all of these dimensions.

A curriculum design needs to include plans for all the different contexts mentioned in Chapter 6 where persons are opened to their experience of God and the world of past, present, and future, and are transformed. The curriculum design needs to include plans for all the methods discussed in Chapter 5--transmitting, reflecting, and transforming. This makes it possible for tradition to be shared and made. Persons learn about God and the Christian faith community and the world. Persons participate in relation to God and the faith community and the world. In other words, persons engage in tradition-taking and tradition-making--communicating and creating a culture which communicates the Gospel. This latter emphasis is held up by Westerhoff in his attention to ritual and community life, which bear the message. Similarly, Ross Snyder calls our attention to both the formative power of culture and the role of the community in forming culture. If the totality of the contexts and methods of Christian religious education are not to be lost, then curriculum design needs to take account of all these dimensions.

All of this is to say that curriculum design is not simply a master plan of printed resources. Neither is it a plan simply for formal courses of study. It is,

instead, a total plan for the life of the community. It grows out of praxis--the actions of the community and the actions upon the community. These actions upon the community come from forces of the past, present, and future. This means that the formers of the plan must be in touch with the community as it is, and with as many as possible of the forces acting upon the community. The curriculum designers need to begin their work with reflection on action. The designers need to reflect on what is the present curriculum (explicit or hidden) of the church, what are the operative values, and what are the forces acting upon the church (both historical and contemporary forces). This kind of reflection, mixed with a large portion of imagination, can lead to curriculum design which can offer substantial guidance to people on the journey.

This does not necessarily mean that curriculum should grow out of the life of one particular community because persons, whether consciously or unconsciously, are part of larger communities (denominational bodies, co-operating church councils, and the global church). This does not, therefore, rule out denominational or cooperative curriculum designs. What it does suggest is that the curriculum designers need to be in touch with the particular and global forces which influence the persons on the journey. They need, also, to be in touch with the historical tradition and the ways in which it has shaped the present

community. They need to image designs which facilitate these persons in understanding and responding to these forces.

If the designers are functioning in a particular context, they need to intentionally study and respond to the forces from larger church bodies and the force acting upon these bodies. If, for example, the identity of the denomination is confused and various pressure groups are confusing it further, this will impact the congregation or local parish in many direct and indirect ways. Curriculum designers need, also, to study and respond to the historical events and the events in the contemporary globe which may or may not be directly felt in their particular context. Historical theological disputes or debates about church organization will have left their mark. Wars or hunger or political change in various parts of the globe will affect the particular community whether or not that community is aware of it. In short, the curriculum designers need to heed John Donne's words:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.¹⁹

¹⁹ John Donne, Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), pp. 108-109.

If the designers are functioning in a larger community context (e.g., denominational or cooperative), they need to study and respond to the forces acting upon particular communities within that larger community. Curriculum designers need to be offered intense experience in many different contexts before they formulate their designs. Perhaps they need to be trained in the participant observation methods of anthropology and they need to be participant observers in different communities. Certainly, the designers need to represent different particular communities (geographically, ethnically, socioeconomically, and so forth). Then they can begin to dream together. Even so, their dreams can never produce a universal blueprint, but creative guidance is certainly possible. Any design which emerges should include suggestions for the adaptation of the curriculum design in varying communities. Further, the design should include training and resources which would facilitate persons in "reading their own contexts" and in adapting and designing in relation to that context.

If a perfect curriculum design existed, someone would have discovered it long ago. We need to stop looking for the magical design that will solve our problems, and begin working at the art of designing. The former suggests a static, universal way of looking at curriculum, and the latter suggests a dynamic, flexible mode.

Resources. All of this discussion leads us back to the place where most curriculum discussions begin--curriculum resources. What kind of resources, or tools for communication, are needed in a traditioning model of education? The most obvious answer to this question is that the resources need to be historical, contemporary, and visionary. To conceive of curriculum resources without dealing with future visions and hopes is to lock curriculum into change without continuity. Either option is equally confining. At least three kinds of resources are important for Christian religious education.

First, any resources which facilitate the transmission and interpretation of the historical tradition are important. Certainly this includes stories in all their forms, liturgy, visual arts, dance, and music. Communication of the historical tradition can take place through the reading of biographies, through the telling of Biblical stories, through a description of the origin of the church's creeds, through participation in liturgy, and through experiencing historical art forms and creating contemporary forms which tell the story.

None of this is complete, however, without encouragement of persons to consider how they experience these things and how they think others have experienced and will experience them. None of this is complete without imagining

what kind of future is pointed to in these historical expressions. This can be done through discussion but it can also be done through simulation games (e.g., reenacting the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople as they struggled with what was to become the Nicene Creed), through drama and role plays, through retelling stories in contemporary settings, through creating liturgy and art that take seriously the historic forms, through historical-critical study of the times and people, and so forth. Each of these methods appeals to different senses and uncovers different insights, so no one method or style of resource is adequate. Resources need to be varied and creative, at the same time that they facilitate transmitting and interpreting the historical tradition, and help people to interpret their own and others' experience and to think toward the future.

Secondly, any resources which facilitate the transmission and interpretation of contemporary culture are important. Again these can include any of the varied forms of cultural expression. These may include films, music from various countries or ethnic groups, stories that parents tell their children, media communication (radio and television), conversations with people about the life issues that concern them most, descriptions of the social and physical conditions affecting certain groups of people, and so forth.

Whatever forms these resources may take, persons

must be encouraged to engage themselves with the people and the issues by considering how they and others experience these things. Also important is reflecting on the relationship between these contemporary cultural expressions and their historical antecedents and between these expressions and the history and future of the Christian tradition. For example, consider the event of a national election. What are the issues being raised? What are the dynamics of the political system? What are your opinions and how do you react to the people and the issues? What are the others' opinions and how do they react to the people and issues? What was the nature of leadership and the election of leaders in Biblical times, e.g., the election of Saul as the first king of Israel? What were the issues then? How do they relate to the issues we raise now? What was the nature of leadership and the election of leaders during the Reformation? Compare Luther's Germany and Calvin's Geneva? How do these inform the situation in our country today? What kind of leadership would be ideal in our world? What kind of leadership helps us lean into the Kingdom of God?

The danger of this kind of contemporary focus is obvious. One need only read through the questions above to find hints of the dangers. People are often deeply invested in these issues, and they have often carefully separated from what they see as their religious concerns.

People often have divergent opinions and do not want to risk alienating friends. Parents often prefer for their children to learn the Bible at church and learn other things elsewhere. Using contemporary resources to raise questions of the historical Christian tradition chops away at compartmentalization. This kind of resource is a statement that no part of life--political, artistic, economic, etc.--is unrelated to the Christian tradition. No part of life, then, is beyond the scope of Christian religious education. The persons who participate in that living faith tradition must deal with all of life as they struggle with their own lives and with the meaning of being part of the Christian tradition.

In addition to historical and contemporary resources, we need visionary resources which facilitate the dreaming of dreams and the seeing of visions. These are very important to traditioning education, and they can take many forms. Visionary resources can be studies of Biblical and historical visions of the Kingdom of God and the challenge that these visions embody. They can be guided meditations into a fantasy world of future. They can be tools for analyzing a particular contemporary situation and for projecting a desirable future and the actions necessary to move toward that future.

Many more options are available, but in any case, future-oriented resources need to invite reflection--

reflection on one's own and others' future vision in light of the Christian tradition. Exploring George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four or Aldous Huxley's Brave New World is interesting, but the significance lies in the engagement with one's own experience which the books stir. Attention needs to be given in our resources to stirring this kind of engagement, at the same time stirring reflection on the Christian tradition and vision. These futuristic resources, then, become the grist for transformation as they pull us into reflection about the future.

Note that in all of this discussion of resources a repeated plea is made for the importance of resources which engage persons and their different senses, which stir and inform reflection and visioning, and which facilitate participation in the living tradition. This last theme has to do with helping persons be in touch with the faith community's past, in touch with the immediate experience of themselves and others, and open to transforming and being transformed. No matter which of the three kinds of resources (historical, contemporary, or visionary) are being used at a particular time, the resource is most helpful if it somehow engages persons in bringing together past, present, and future in a way that the tradition is reclaimed and transformed.

CONCLUSIONS: CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONING CURRICULUM

Curriculum in a traditioning model of education will have at least three characteristics. It will be in tune with the persons at the intersection; it will facilitate interactions; and it will promote knowledge with understanding and transformation.

To say that traditioning curriculum will be in tune with persons at the intersection is to say that it will be designed with those persons in mind. It will be designed appropriate to the developmental levels of the anticipated audience, that is, to the anticipated sources of motivation, issues, abilities, and questions. It will be designed appropriate to the broad cultural context of that audience, and adaptable to the many particular contexts.

To say that traditioning curriculum will facilitate interactions is to say that it will be designed to help teachers interact with students, to help persons interact within themselves and with others, and to encourage persons to interact with the historical faith tradition, the contemporary world, and the community's hopes for the future. This means that curriculum makers must study and deal with past, present, and future. They must keep in mind those persons who will be part of the curriculum and will use the printed resources. Further, they must

recognize that the curriculum will indeed include these people and will enrich their journeys as well as be enriched by what these people contribute of themselves to the curriculum.

To say that traditioning curriculum will promote knowledge with understanding and transformation is to say that it should be informing, enriching, and creative of openings. Curriculum, then, needs to communicate the accumulating wisdom of the Christian faith community and to create openings for persons to understand and enter more fully into the transforming power of the community's tradition.

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